MEMORIES AND MUSINGS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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Biography of Sir C Sankaran Nair
Lenin Through Indian Eyes
Russia Revisited
Twilight in China
A Diplomat Speaks
Indo-Soviet Treaty
Yesterday and Today

MEMORIES AND MUSINGS

K.P.S MENON

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Preface

It has been said that old age begins when regrets take the place of dreams But looking back on my life of 80 years I cannot say that I am oppressed by regrets But memories come thick and fast memories of men and things, great and small, grave and gay, sublime and ridiculous One is inclined to amuse oneself and, hopefully, others by musing over them These memories and musings form the subject of this book

A number of essays included in this book had been brought together and published in 1976 under the title, *Yesterday and Today* That book had a very warm reception It consisted of two parts called "Yesterday" and "Today", but after the sensational general elections of 1977, what was today in 1976 has now become yesterday, some of yesterday's men have become the men of today, and some who in 1977 had been relegated to the past are promising to be tomorrow's leaders Moreover, there was a certain amount of unavoidable overlapping between yesterday and today On the whole I felt that the title "Yesterday and Today" was no longer particularly appropriate

Almost all the articles marked with an asterisk in the list of contents were written after *Yesterday and Today* was published The book is now divided into five parts on a thematic rather than on a chronological basis The first part deals with personalities The second throws sidelights on the state of India before and after independence, as seen through the eyes of a civilian who had served in both as an administrator and as a diplomat, the third deals with certain aspects of India's international relations, and the fourth, more specifically, with the USSR, where I had spent the longest and, I venture to think, the most fruitful part of my service The fifth part of the book contains the musings of an octogenarian on some aspects of his long life and, prodded by the enterprising editors of some journals, on life itself

I am inclined to think that most of the pieces in this book have a perennial interest There are but few articles which deal with the internal situation my primary interest lies elsewhere Even when contemporary politics are touched upon, as has been done in the last

three or four chapters of Part II, the comments are made from the standpoint of a bemused, and sometimes bewildered, spectator rather than of an actor

Some of the articles which deal with the international situation in Part III lend themselves to the reproach that they are dated Many of them were written when Dr Kissinger ruled, or tried to rule, the roost of Western diplomacy and reflect the exasperation of India and the "third world" at his politics Subsequent developments, however, have shown how little the policies have changed, however much the style might have done, and how difficult it is for politicians to match rhetoric with action on such matters as a new international economic order and the conversion of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace *Plus ca change, Plus c'est la meme*

K P S Menon

Acknowledgements

My acknowledgements are due to the journals in which, or the medium through which, the articles included in the book were first published They are, in alphabetical order, All India Radio, *Amity, The Art of Living, Bhavan's Journal, Capital, Caravan, Cultural Forum, Eve's Weekly, The Illustrated Weekly of India, India Quarterly, The Indian Express, Indian and Foreign Review, Indo-British Review, The National Herald, Mathrubhumi Annual, Patriot, Round Table, Sainik Samachar, Secular Democracy, Shankar's Weekly, The Statesman, Swarajya, Triveni, Vanitha* and *The Youth Times*

The name of the journal is acknowledged at the foot of each article Some were sent to, and distributed by, Feature Unit, a news agency run by an old friend and a veteran journalist, A S Raman Among the newspapers, which have received my articles through Feature Unit and published them, are the *Bharat Jyoti, Deccan Herald, Free Press Journal, Hitavada, Madras Mail, Navhind Times* and *Tribune*

Some time ago Mr Abu Abraham, the celebrated cartoonist and Member of Parliament, told me that if I were to make a collection of my articles he would be happy to illustrate it It was this spontaneous offer which put the idea of this book into my head I am most grateful to Mr. Abu Abraham for his vivid illustrations I am also most grateful to Mr. V Artamanov, a Russian artist, for the sketches in Chapters 45 and 51

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PART I

PERSONALITIES

1 The Relevance of Gandhiji Today

The subject prescribed by the AIR for my talk is 'The Relevance of Gandhiji Today' Gandhiji is a man who was relevant yesterday, is relevant today and will be relevant for all time to come And he is relevant not merely for India but for the world The number of such men in the history of mankind can be counted on the fingers of one's hand

There has been a tendency to exalt such men into gods Gandhiji was afraid that this fate might befall him too He therefore took all possible steps against his deification He left explicit instructions that his body was not to be embalmed, that no temples were to be erected in his name nor any prayers offered to him

Gandhiji, however, could not escape the title of Mahatma 'The title of Mahatma has often pained me,' he said, 'and there is not a moment when it has not tickled me' This title was coined by Rabindranath Tagore and has stuck to him

It is relevant to study how the man became the Mahatma Gandhiji started life as a very ordinary person Physically, he was thin, frail, with large ears which caused his irrepressible companion, Mrs Sarojini Nadu, to call him Micky Mouse Intellectually, he had no special distinction in his childhood He was a very mediocre student In his *Autobiography* he says he was known as 'the fool of the family' He was not a born speaker In the first case in which he appeared before a magistrate, he became nervous and tongue-tied, lost his case and was chased out of the court by an angry client Yet there came a time when this man could move by his words millions of men and women to action

Gandhiji's style of speaking has a relevance for all speakers His sentences were always short He avoided polysyllabic words His prose was plain and muscular It conformed to Daniel Defoe's definition of the perfect style "If I was asked what I supposed to be 'a perfect style'," said Defoe, "I would answer 'that in which a man speaks to five hundred people of common and varied capacities, idiots and lunatics excepted, and would be understood by them all' "

Gandhiji had an eager, inquisitive mind He retained his mental curiosity till the end of his life One has only to remember that during his last imprisonment he tried to learn Russian in jail in order to read Karl Marx in that language

The great formative influences on Gandhiji were the Gita, the Bible, Leo Tolstoy and John Ruskin He had a concrete mind and was not interested in abstract ideas unless he put them into practice He read John Ruskin's *Unto the Last* and was greatly moved by it 'The book gripped me,' he said, 'I could not get any sleep that night I determined to change my life in accordance with the book ' The essential ideas of the book were that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all, that all work is meritorious, for instance a lawyer's work has the same value as a barber's, that manual labour is not to be despised and the life of the tiller of the soil is a worthy life He put these principles into practice by founding a farm in South Africa called the Phoenix Farm, which was later called the Tolstoy Farm

Jawaharlal Nehru once called Mahatma Gandhi 'the great peasant'. He had a peasant's limitations He, like Leo Tolstoy, appreciated nature more than art The term 'great peasant' must be regarded as a compliment, for after all more than 80 per cent of the people of India live in the villages Gandhiji knew that industrialisation by itself would not cure their ills Sometimes he is made out as an uncompromising opponent of machinery 'How can I be against machinery when I know that even this body is a delicate piece of machinery?', he said 'The spinning wheel is a machine, the little tooth pick is a machine What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such ' 'Today,' he said, 'machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of the poor ' And he fully echoed Leo Tolstoy's call to the rich 'Get off the backs of the poor '

Gandhiji judged all problems with reference to the plight of the hapless millions living in villages 'I cannot own a dozen houses and go about in a motor car and preach socialism I must descend to the level of the poorest of the poor ' And therefore he adopted the loin cloth as a grand gesture of identification with the people

Gandhiji had a mind which was free from dogma He was a great apostle of nonviolence, and yet he said 'Between violence and abject surrender I would prefer the former ' He deplored the fact that the Revolution of 1917 was attended with so much violence and yet he said that 'a Revolution sanctified by the sacrifices of such pure spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain'

Gandhiji's permanent relevance lies not only in what he said and

did but in what he was Jawaharlal Nehru was once asked whether in moments of crisis, he would ask himself how Gandhiji would have reacted to it He replied 'No I would think of Gandhiji and recapture his balance and composure and come to my own conclusions'

That is what Buddha, the greatest Indian of all ages, advised men to do 'Do not believe,' said Gautama Buddha, 'in what you have heard, do not believe in tradition simply because it has been handed down from generation to generation, do not believe in anything because it is rumoured and spoken of by many, do not believe merely on the authority of your elders and teachers After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good of one and all, then accept it and live up to it' Gandhiji's relevance for all time consists in the fact that he was a man who, after observation and analysis, adopted certain principles after making sure that they agreed with reason and were conducive to the general good and then lived up to them, even to the extent of laying down his life for them Therein lies Gandhiji's relevance to India and the world

(All India Radio, 1978)

2. Gandhi's Hostess

Recently I had the honour of delivering the inaugural lecture at the opening of a Memorial Hall at 'Chraistavashram' in Kottayam in honour of Miss Muriel Lester Indians remember her best as the person with whom Mahatma Gandhi stayed in London when he went there to attend the Round Table Conference in 1930

We ourselves met Muriel Lester for the first time in 1953 in Moscow Together we visited the house, now a museum, of Leo Tolstoy, a kindred spirit — kindred to her and to Gandhiji Gandhiji used to say that apart from the *Gita* the three great formative influences in his life were the New Testament, Leo Tolstoy and John Ruskin

We went round Tolstoy's palatial house into which, to his aristocratic wife's intense annoyance, he used to allow the unkempt peasants to enter and had long talks and games with them and their children We met Bulgakov, Tolstoy's last Secretary, who was 23 when Tolstoy died and was now an old man He told us how, in the small hours of one morning, Tolstoy, tired of his home, of his uncomprehending wife, and of life itself, and disgusted with the conduct of his disciple who called themselves Tolstoyans — 'God save me from the Tolstoyans' he once said — woke up his coachman — we met the coachman, too — and asked him to drive him away somewhere, anywhere, and that turned out to be his last journey

We were specially interested in the objects showing his relations with Mahatma Gandhi. We were thrilled to see a letter from Gandhiji to him in which Gandhiji had subscribed himself as 'Your devoted disciple' We also saw a book about Gandhiji, written by a white missionary in South Africa, containing a favourite Gujarati song of Gandhiji's 'If you give a glass of water to a man who gave you a glass of water when you were thirsty, there is no merit in it, but there is merit in returning good for evil' Tolstoy had sidelined this passage and written in the margin, 'This is the height of wisdom'

The next time we saw Muriel was in Gorki where Lenin spent his last years after he had been shot at and wounded It was a wintry day

and the ground was covered with snow Nevertheless, we saw Muriel, approaching the age of 80, running down the glade as if she was a girl of 18 I was not surprised when I heard a couple of years later that she had had a fall and fractured her leg But she retained her vivacity till the end of her life

We also spent a day with Muriel in her country-house in Sussex and romped about the lovely woods She told us many an anecdote about Gandhiji, who, disdaining the British Government's invitation to him to stay in a posh hotel, preferred to stay with Muriel Lester in the poor men's quarters in London's East End She told us how a buxom woman, a little the worse for drink, drew Gandhiji to her and said 'Be a sport, Gandi, (sic), come and dance with me' And Gandhiji complied, to the huge merriment of all

When I saw Muriel last she was busy collecting subscriptions for a statue of Mahatma Gandhi to be put up in East London She told me that relatively the poor were more generous than the rich In particular she told me that a rich Cabinet Minister, in order to show the scant regard in which he held Mahatma Gandhi, made a donation of 10 shillings to the Gandhi Memorial Fund And I told Muriel of an Egyptian trader who, on being deported from London, claimed damages for 10,010 pounds, 10,000 pounds for the loss of his business and 10 pounds for the loss of his English wife! But the Minister's churlishness was not typical of the British attitude Let us remember that after all the British treated Gandhi, their arch opponent, with greater consideration than any other imperialist ruler would have done, and no less a person than Prince Charles, the heir-apparent to the British throne, presided at the Centenary Celebrations of the man who, more than any other, had, in perfect amity and non-violence, done him out of the Indian throne

What was Muriel's distinctive quality? I would say, her cheerfulness Her was a robust, contagious cheerfulness It was not the empty cheerfulness of a man who ignores the miseries of the world Not the lofty cheerfulness of a man who lives in an ivory tower and looks down upon the toiling, sweating humanity below It was the cheerfulness of a person who recognises that though the earth is a vale of tears, it is still bathed in sunlight — the light of Truth, Goodness and Beauty in other words, the light of God

Muriel's cheerfulness was the outward expression of an innate quality, love Love, like charity, begins at home Her relations with her sister who, as the saying goes, was not all there, but rather off her head, were most touching How callous society is towards such unfor-

tunate persons! This was shown in the Malayalam film 'Irruttinte Atmavu' (The Soul of Darkness), to which the Central Board of Film Awards, of which I happened to be the Chairman, gave the award as the best film dealing with social problems Muriel treated her sister with the utmost consideration and love It was lovely to see them together, chatting and playing, and Muriel behaving as if her sister was entirely sane and Muriel herself a little off her head!

Muriel loved all humanity, but her love was not towards humanity in the abstract but towards human beings There are some persons who, in their love for humanity, do not mind destroying human beings The USA, in its love for freedom, as conceived by it, and its zest to save Vietnam from communist 'servitude', has pretty nearly destroyed it Infinitely more bombs were dropped on Vietnam than in all the theatres of the Second World War And the casualties were frightful Yet, as Arthur Schlesinger has put it 'All that the Vietnam War has done is to show that 500,000 GIs and the world's most advanced techonology could not stand up against a few thousand guerillas in black pyjamas' But these men in black pyjamas were fired by the spirit of freedom

Muriel abhorred war So did Mahatma Gandhi During the First World War, however, Gandhiji exhorted his people to fight on the side of the Allies He in his simplicity believed in such slogans of the First World War as that it was 'a war to end war', 'a war to make the world safe for democracy' He did not suspect that the war to end war was going to produce more wars He did not suspect that the war to make the world safe for democracy would make the world pretty safe for dictatorship for a whole generation At that time, when Gandhiji was acting almost as recruiting officer for Britain and the Allies, Muriel was in prison as a conscientious objector Despite Gandhiji's aberration during the First World War, Muriel developed the highest esteem for him as a man who subsequently held aloft the torch of nonviolence when the world was enveloped in violence

Muriel and Gandhi had one great quality in common compassion. They spent their life for the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden. Both were born in affluent circumstances but both adopted the simple way of life. Muriel moved from her home in the fashionable West End of London and lived among the poor in East End, just as Mahatma Gandhi preferred to live in the Sweepers' Colony in Delhi And it is in the East End of London that Gandhiji's statue has been installed.

My wife and I came into close contact with Muriel on our long drive back to Moscow from Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoy's home That

journey made an impression on her, too Let me share with the readers a letter which we received from her in September, 1967

My dear and precious friend,

I awoke early this Sunday morning and was repeating one of our loveliest hymns, when my thoughts flew to you and Mr Menon and that lovely Sunday morning in Moscow where, as we were driving out to Yasnaya Polyana, you and I started quoting to each other the best bits of our spiritual and literary heritage You were putting into understandable language lovely couplets from the Gita and I asked you if you knew 'The Hound of Heaven'

Before you could answer, your husband turned around and said, 'Miss Lester, since we left Moscow I have repeated it to myself beginning to end'

You are both so often in my heart and prayers and this is just an outreach in written words—actually unnecessary between friends

Yours Ever,
Muriel

I remember two slokas which appealed to her Those were from the *Gita* One was

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतःस्म्प्लुतोदके
तावान् सर्वेषुवेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः

(A man who thinks that all the wisdom of the world is contained in the Vedas is like a man who, seeing a pond, thinks that all the waters of the world are in that pond, when the whole countryside is overflowing with water)

Another favourite sloka of mine, which I recited to her was

येप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः
तेपिमामेव कौन्तेय भजन्त्यविधि पूर्वकम्

(Even a man who worships alien gods, though that may be contrary to the Scriptures, comes to me provided he does so with faith)

Muriel was thrilled to listen to these slokas

These slokas might well form the motto of the 'Fellowship of Reconciliation', which was formed during the First World War and

of which Muriel was an ardent member The inmates of Chraistavashram, headed by Acharya K K Chandy, are members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation Here is a group of men and women who are trying to live according to the religion of Christ—not Christianity in the institutional sense, but the gospel of Christ as it was preached in Galilee Leo Tolstoy was one such person, though he was ostracised by the Church So was Mahatma Gandhi, though he was a Hindu in every fibre of his being Muriel Lester was another All in all, she was one of the noblest and most lovable of human beings who trod this earth of ours and tried to make life a little more tolerable, especially for the weaker sections of society.

(*Eve's Weekly*, 1975)

3 A Pre-Gandhian Patriot

It is an interesting coincidence that two great historical figures, Mahatma Gandhi and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, were born within a year of each other, the former in 1869 and the latter in 1870 They appeared, too, at about the same time on their life's mission in their respective countries Lenin appeared in Russia in 1917 after a long period of exile in Europe, and Gandhi appeared in India a year or two earlier after a long period of voluntary exile in South Africa They opened a new chapter in the history of their countries, and not in their countries alone

Before the advent of Gandhi and Lenin there were others who tried to advance freedom in their own way With the advent of Gandhi and Lenin, and against their blinding greatness, their predecessors might look like pygmies Yet, to their contemporaries, they were far from pygmies, they were almost giants One need only think of the contribution made to Indian nationalism by such patriots as Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Surendranath Banerjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Mrs Annie Beasant Among them must be reckoned Sir C Sankaran Nair. He presided over the Indian National Congress as early as 1897 He also rose to that holy of holies, the Viceroy's Executive Council, only to throw up his assignment in indignant protest against the martial law atrocities in the Punjab in 1919

Unfortunately, towards the end of his life, Sankaran Nair was under a cloud He was a man of sturdy independence He asserted it not merely vis-a-vis the British Government but vis-a-vis what was to be a more invincible force, Mahatma Gandhi He had the courage, or the temerity, to differ openly from Mahatma Gandhi and criticise his unorthodox methods in the struggle for independence The result was that in some quarters he came to be regarded not merely as pre-Gandhian but as anti-Gandhian This, however, does not detract from his stature as an ardent and stalwart patriot who rendered signal services to the nation

Sankaran Nair was a lawyer by profession. To him independence

was not an end in itself but a means to an end, the end being national regeneration He knew that many evils had crept into society and his experience as a Member of the Madras Legislative Council showed that in trying to remove them, the British Government invariably acted as a stumbling block For instance, his bill to reform the matrilineal system in Malabar was defeated by the members of the Government and its nominees who had a majority in the Legislative Council Sankaran Nair became convinced that social reconstruction was impossible without political emancipation

How right he was! Early in this century, in an article in the prestigious journal, *Contemporary Review*, London, on 'Indian Law and English Legislation', Sankaran Nair enumerated the matters which needed urgent attention They were the removal of polygamy, the abolition of untouchability, the grant of equality to women, the enactment of a proper Hindu Code and the introduction of free primary education Each of these reforms had to wait for India to be independent before it was realised

Sankaran Nair presided at the Amraoti Session of the Indian National Congress in 1897 and was one of the youngest presidents of the Congress 1897 was known as 'the year of troubles' It was, as the Congress Report for that year says, 'a year of calamities, to the Indian people Famine, pestilence, earthquakes, floods, fire, war, political persecutions, all these contributed to fill the cup of human misery to the brim'

Sankaran Nair did not mince words regarding government's responsibility for this state of affairs 'Government', he said, 'is morally responsible for the extreme poverty of the masses, for the scarcity which prevails almost every year in some part of the country or other, for the famine that frequently desolates the land and claims more victims and creates more distress than under any civilised Government anywhere else in the world.'

Sankaran Nair denounced the arrest and conviction of the great Indian patriot, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, for sedition by a jury of six Europeans and three Indians, in which the six Europeans predictably found him guilty and the three Indians not guilty He also condemned the imprisonment of the Natoo Brothers as 'a savage act recalling the worst days of irresponsible despotism' He denounced the practice of sending Indian soldiers hither and thither ostensibly in India's interest but really for imperial purposes and demanded that the cost of all such expeditions should be debited to the British Exchequer 'An army is maintained at our cost', he said, 'far in excess of what it should be.

The military element is supreme in the Viceroy's Council For interests other than Indian, countries are invaded and all the horrors of war are let loose at the expense of the Indian taxpayer As England directs our foreign policy and as wars are undertaken to maintain English rule, the English treasury ought to pay the entire cost' As Surendranath Banerjee put it, Sankaran Nair's Presidential Address was 'a strong and masculine utterance, worthy of the man and suited to the times when the forces of reaction were strongly in evidence'

Sankaran Nair soon rose to the top of his profession and was appointed Advocate-General in the Madras Presidency He refused to handle a case, however much the Government wished him to do so, unless it was a cast-iron case The criterion which he applied in political cases was not only whether a prosecution was possible but whether it was necessary and desirable On more than one occasion he saved G Subramania Iyer, the founder of *The Hindu*, whom he described as 'one of the ablest and noblest of my friends', and his successor, Kasturiranga Iyengar, from the clutches of the law He told the Government that the articles in *The Hindu* might be technically seditious but that it would be unwise to launch a prosecution

As Judge of the High Court, Sankaran Nair did his best to give a liberal interpretation to some of the provisions of the Hindu law which were meant for a very different age As Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, a great jurist, has put it, 'Sankaran Nair always thought in terms of society He was not wedded to the law in the manner in which some of us are wedded, burying ourselves in law-books without thinking of the society of which we are members' To use a fashionable phrase nowadays, Sankaran Nair was a 'committed judge', committed not to the policies of the government but to the good of society And in British days government policies did not always coincide with the good of the people, and still less with their sentiments

Sankaran Nair was *persona non grata* with the Britishers, official and non-official, in India Nevertheless, the British Government recognised his calibre and appointed him in 1915 as the only Indian Member of the Viceroy's Council His term was one of long and strenuous struggle against the other members of the Executive Council who were thoroughly reactionary in their attitude towards Indian constitutional reforms Differing from his colleagues and the Viceroy, Sankaran Nair attached a dissenting minute to their recommendations to the Secretary of State for constitutional reform in India By and large, his dissenting minute was accepted by the British Government and formed the basis of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms But for

Sankaran Nair the Reforms would have been far less liberal Mahatma Gandhi himself appreciated them and, at the Amritsar Congress of 1919, moved a resolution, conveying the 'warmest thanks' of the Congress to Mr Montagu

In 1919 there occurred the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh and other atrocities in the Punjab, and Sankaran Nair resigned from the Viceroy's Executive Council in protest against the conduct of the Government He then joined the Secretary of State's Council, simply in order to bring to light the atrocities in the Punjab, of which he had inside knowledge, and to influence the Press and public opinion in England It was largely due to his insistence that a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the events of 1919 and the guilty officials, civilian and military, were punished 'As far as it lay in my power', said Sankaran Nair, 'I was determined to prevent another Jalianwala Bagh in India'

Sankaran Nair fought a libel case, which Sir Michael O'dwyer, Governor of the Punjab, brought against him for referring to the 'atrocities' committed by him Though Sankaran Nair lost the case and had to pay heavy damages, it served a useful purpose It brought into the open court and before the public the terrible happenings in the Punjab 'The verdict of the Special Jury', wrote the London *Times,* 'will, in the minds of millions in India, tend to establish the truth of Gandhi's repeated assertion that justice for India cannot be obtained from an alien government or law court'

Sankaran Nair was no respector of persons He always called a spade a spade, however exalted the person he was talking to One example of this trait would suffice At his farewell interview with the Viceroy after he relinquished his Membership of the Viceroy's Council, Lord Chelmsford asked him whether he had any suggestion regarding his successor 'Yes', he said 'Who?', asked Lord Chelmsford 'That man, there, Ram Pershad', said Sankaran Nair (Ram Pershad was the peon) 'What?', asked Lord Chelmsford, amazed 'Why!', said Sankaran Nair 'He is tall, he is handsome, the livery sits well on him and he will say "yes", to whatever you say That is the kind of man you want.' Who but he would have dared to talk to the Representative of the King Emperor in this strain, and in those days?

Sankaran Nair could not see eye to eye with Mahatma Gandhi and wrote a book called *Gandhi and Anarchy.* He held Mahatma Gandhi in high esteem for his character and idealism, but he feared that his unorthodox methods would lead to chaos Wedded to constitutional methods, he dreaded that a spirit of lawlessness might come to per-

vade society And seeing the way in which Gandhiji's methods have been used and abused for petty and even unworthy purposes, who can deny that to some extent his fears have come true?

It is true that none of the pre-Gandhian leaders, not excluding Sankaran Nair, knew how to mobilise the energies of the people for the struggle for independence, as Gandhiji so magnificently did That should not, however, make us blind to the great services which they have rendered to the nation, nor should we underrate the indomitable spirit of independence which men like Chettur Sankaran Nair displayed at a time when the British Empire was at the zenith of its power

(Feature Unit, 1975)

4. Winston Churchill Diagnosed by His Physician

The life of Winston Churchill, like that of his *bete noire*, Mahatma Gandhi, makes an endlessly fascinating study I have recently read the diaries of his personal physician, Lord Moran, which have been published in the form of a controversial book, *The Struggle for Survival* It is a valuable addition to the ever-growing Churchilliana

The book does full justice to Churchill as a war-leader, one of the greatest the world has seen One lays down the book with the feeling, what a curious creature is man! A mixture of the good and the not-so-good, the great and the petty, egotism and altruism, vision and shortsightedness, the sublime and the ridiculous No wonder that Lord Moran has quoted without disapproval Lord Attlee's verdict on Churchill that 'he was fifty per cent genius and fifty per cent bloody fool'

No man is a hero to his valet Nor to his physician Both the valet and the physician get to know the man's weaknesses But whereas the physician generally gets to know of, and cures, a man's physical weaknesses, Lord Moran was acutely aware of his patient's political weaknesses as well

Lord Moran accompanied Churchill to all the great War Conferences at Cairo, Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam He was present, too, at many of Churchill's talks with the high and mighty And his conclusion is that 'if Winston's virtues were more than full size, his faults were made to scale'

Most of his faults arose from his stubborn conservatism Conservatism may be desirable and even necessary if it means a desire to conserve the good things of the past but it becomes a bad thing if it means to conserve or resurrect the past with all its drawbacks and its imaginary glory even after the glory has departed 'Tell me', said Churchill to Lord Moran once, 'one new thing which has done any good except (he added with a twinkle in his eyes) medicine'

The British public who adored Churchill as their leader during the War were aware of his limitations during times of peace And Lord

Moran knew that they were aware of them In May 1945 when Churchill was discussing with Lord Moran his prospects of victory in the coming elections, Lord Moran told him that there was universal gratitude to him but there was a notion that he was not very keen on 'this new one-world business' Churchill replied that 'the desire for a brave new world is by no means universal, but the gratitude is' Churchill's defeat in the elections showed that Lord Moran felt the pulse of the people better than Churchill

Churchill's incurable conservatism showed itself in his attitude towards the peoples of resurgent Asia and Africa To Churchill, the British Empire—he insisted on calling it the British Empire even after the term, British, had been dropped and the Empire became the Commonwealth of Nations—had a mystic sanctity of its own 'His allegiance', says Lord Moran, 'was always to the King and the country, in that order ' In fact his attachment to the King was greater than his attachment to God

Once Gen Smuts, the South African leader, had a talk with Churchill about Mahatma Gandhi 'Gandhi', said Smuts, 'is a man of God, but you and I are mundane people Gandhi always appealed to religious motives You never have That is why you have failed ' To this Churchill replied, 'But I have made more Bishops than anyone since St Augustine!' To Churchill, Gandhi was but a 'naked fakir' and Jawaharlal Nehru and others were but 'men of straw of whom nothing will be heard in a few years' time'

Lord Moran has described how on many occasions Roosevelt raised the question of giving independence to India Churchill invariably took the view that it would be disastrous to do so Once, irritated beyond endurance, he cried 'Take India if that is what you want, but you will have a blood-bath ' Yet once India became independent and Nehru became Prime Minister and Churchill himself became Prime Minister for the last time, he reconciled himself to the fact of Indian independence He even got over his antipathy to Nehru Once Lord Butler found Churchill in tears (Churchill had a habit of crying unabashedly in moments of emotion) He had just met Nehru 'We put that man in jail for years and he bears us no grudge I could not have been so magnanimous', he said

An attractive quality of Churchill was that he was not afraid of being charged with inconsistency 'I would rather be right than consistent', he said 'During my life I have had to eat my words many a time, and I have found it a very nourishing diet '

Churchill's attitude to Russia is an example of his resilience Until

the Second World War, he used to be the unrelenting enemy of Communist Russia No wonder, because the Revolution of 1917 had shaken beyond redemption the old order which he loved Churchill regarded both Fascism and Communism as a menace to civilisation but when Fascism showed itself to be the greater menace and pounced on the world, he at first tolerated and afterwards welcomed the Soviet Union as an ally against Fascism

With Stalin he had a kind of love-hate relationship He disliked all that Stalin stood for and yet he recognised his greatness In Stalin he met his match Stalin did not mince words in accusing him of deliberately delaying the opening of a second front in Europe and leaving Russia to bear the full brunt of Germany's onslaught Lord Moran has given a word picture of Stalin at his meeting with Churchill in 1942 'puffing his pipe with his eyes half closed and emitting streams of insults He said that if the British army had been fighting the Germans as the Russians did it would not be afraid of the Germans ' 'In Russia', said Stalin, 'it is dangerous to be a coward '

On another occasion Stalin asked Churchill, 'Are you afraid of us? We are not out to conquer the world, though we could if we cared to ' 'Stalin's tenacity', said Churchill, 'has no counter on our side He is very patient and never loses his temper '

Churchill resented the increasing tendency on the part of Roosevelt to side with Stalin He was disgusted with the decision which was made to open a second front through Western Europe, and not, as he had wanted, through the Balkans, 'the soft under-belly of Europe' He was also disappointed by the division of Germany 'I prayed to the Americans on my knees', he said, after the Potsdam Conference in 1945, 'not to hand over to the Russians such a chunk of Germany until after the Conference It would have been a bargaining counter to us but they would not listen ' Soon after, he made the famous iron curtain speech, which formed a kind of overture to the lurid dance of the cold war

Yet before long Churchill realised the dangers of the cold war, escalating into a hot war in this nuclear age In his first speech after becoming Prime Minister in 1953 he said with genuine concern, 'We and all nations stand at this hour of human destiny upon the portals of supreme catastrophe or of measureless reward My faith is that in God's mercy we shall choose right '

Among the Allied statesmen Churchill was the first to have recognised the wholesome changes that took place in Russia after the passing of Stalin, at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the

Soviet Union, where some of the fundamental maxims of Marxism were modified so as to make them agree with the grim realities of the nuclear age 'A new mood, if not a new spirit, has come over the Soviet Union', he said, and it would be advisable on the part of the West to recognise it But the US government under the over-riding influence of John Foster Dulles, poohpoohed these changes All that these changes signified to Dulles was that 'Russia is on the run The unity and resolution of the West have prevailed'

Unfortunately, President Eisenhower was of a very different stamp from President Roosevelt Churchill felt that Eisenhower was completely dominated by Dulles 'Ike', said Churchill, 'leaves everything to Dulles His text is always the same, that nothing but evil will come out of a meeting with the Russians' 'Ten years ago', said Churchill to Lord Moran, 'I could have dealt with Dulles Even as it is, I have not been defeated by him' Referring to his deteriorating health, he added, 'I have been defeated by my own decay'

Lord Moran has observed that Churchill's supreme asset was his gift for words 'Few men', wrote Lord Moran, 'have stuck so assiduously to one craft, the handling of words In peace it made him politically famous, in war it won all men's hearts'

Words, however, cannot by themselves win men's hearts in times of peace That is why before the Second World War, and again thereafter, Churchill found himself in the wilderness

There cannot be a better judge of a man's character than his wife Lady Churchill told Lord Moran 'Winston has always seen things through blinkers He sees nothing outside what he is determined to attain He knows nothing of the life of the ordinary people He has never been in a bus and only once in the underground And then he went round and round not knowing where to come out, and had to be rescued Winston had always had the ability and the determination to live his life exactly as he wished'

It did not strike Churchill that other peoples in the world, and the people in his own country, might wish to live their lives as they wished and not as he would like them to do It is the failure to recognise this elementary fact that made him, with all his brilliance as a war-leader, so great an anachronism in the twentieth century

(*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 1978)

5. Interview With Stalin

This day, twenty-five years ago, I had an interview with Josef Stalin Every detail of that interview remains fresh in my mind

This is accounted for partly, but only partly, by the rarity of Stalin's interviews He received very few diplomats, indeed, the number of diplomats received by him could be counted on the fingers of one's hand Stalin declined to receive our first Ambassador to the USSR, Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, though he received her successor, Dr Radhakrishnan, both on his arrival in, and departure from, Moscow A meeting with Stalin was so rare that it made headlines in the world Press

Stalin received me in the Kremlin at 8 p m on the 17th February, 1953 I must confess that my first impression of him was disappointing The portraits and statues of Stalin had made him out as a man of almost superhuman dimensions, as our own artists and sculptors have done regarding Gautama Buddha But here was a man of medium, or less than medium, height, with a pock-marked face and a somewhat shuffling gait But this impression did not last long I left Stalin after an hour's conversation, feeling that I had been in the presence of one of those tremendous personalities but for whom the history of their country, but not their country alone, would have been different

When the door of his study opened, Stalin came forward to receive me, shook hands with me briskly, seated me in a chair opposite his, with interpreters flanking us, and said, 'Mr Ambassador, I am at your service ' Evidently he expected me to begin the conversation

I discovered that Stalin was a man of few words He was a listener rather than a talker A questioner, too, and occasionally he made a comment His questions were always pointed, and his comments piquant

I began by saying that I had been in the USSR for four months and had received much kindness and hospitality 'Even our shepherds are hospitable', said Stalin, 'and we are no worse than shepherds.' The Soviet Union, he said, regarded all peoples as equal and respected

them all 'That is so, particularly in respect of the great people of India', he said

Stalin seemed keen on knowing about the various facets of Indian life He asked me about our relations with Pakistan, the state of our defences, our trade with Japan and our language question On Pakistan he merely said, 'How primitive that a state should be founded on religion!' Had we ever considered the idea of a federation with Pakistan, asked Stalin 'That would be the ideal solution', he said

Apologising for the question, he asked if our armed forces were strong enough to defend India I said that India had a compact, well-trained and well-disciplined army which had distinguished itself on many a field of battle during the war, but our Air Force was still in its infancy 'In these days it is difficult to defend a country effectively without a powerful Air Force', said Stalin He seemed more concerned with the defence of our country than we ourselves were in those palmy days Did he, I wonder, have a premonition of the three wars that we had to fight in the succeeding decade and the graver war in 1971?

When I told Stalin, in reply to a question, that our commercial relations with Japan had been growing, he said, with a twinkle in his eye, 'Japan will soon undersell you in the world market and even in your own '

Stalin asked whether 'Hindu'—he said Hindu and not Hindi—was our national language I said, yes, Hindi was the language of the majority of the people of India 'What was the common language before independence?' asked Stalin I said that a language called Hindustani had been evolving itself as the language of the people, of both Hindus and Muslims, but after partition Hindi was becoming highly Sanskritised and Hindustani or Urdu was becoming highly Persianised, it was taking a large number of words from Persian and Arabic 'Then it cannot be a real people's language', said Stalin

Stalin's silences were more eloquent than his words On being informed by the Foreign Office that Stalin would be receiving me on the 17th February, 1953, I had sent a telegram to Jawaharlal Nehru, asking whether he wanted me to discuss anything in particular with him Nehru asked me to give his greetings to Stalin and, if possible, to explain to him the purport of a resolution which we had introduced in the General Assembly in order to end the stalemate in Korea That resolution was seriously misunderstood by the Soviet government and savagely attacked by that fiery orator, Mr Vyshinsky I explained to Stalin that our only object in introducing the resolution was to facilitate a cease-fire in Korea I explained this at some length, but

there was absolutely no response from Stalin He listened to me, doodling all the time and saying da, da, da (yes, yes, yes) It might as well have meant nyet, nyet, nyet (no, no, no)

The fact is that Stalin did not want to commit himself on Korea North Koreans, South Koreans, Chinese, Americans and their Allies were merrily killing one another, and not a Russian soldier was involved Stalin seemed to take a macabre pleasure in this situation Soon after Stalin died, this very resolution became the basis of peace in Korea

As regards the international situation, fraught with peril for world peace, Stalin put the blame squarely on the USA 'Mr Ambassador', he said, 'your country wants peace My country wants peace Even the people of America want peace But there are some interests which do not want peace, because war is profitable to them They want to make profits even out of blood' Words, that have been fully proved by the events during the last quarter of a century

Towards the end of our conversation Stalin said, 'Our peasant is a simple man, but wise When he sees a wolf he shoots it He does not preach morals to the wolf He shoots it, and the wolf knows it and behaves accordingly' I then peeped at a piece of paper on which he had been doodling and I saw a number of wolves there, in various poses, vividly drawn

On my return to the Embassy, I felt very important All the world's pressmen were there in order to know what had transpired in my interview with Stalin Many of them asked me how Stalin looked, as there had been many reports that he was ill, dying, and even dead Indeed, one American newspaper said that the man who received me was not Stalin, but his replica I said that Stalin looked very fit Within ten days he was taken ill, and within fifteen days he was dead

Not long after Stalin's death I presented my credentials in Budapest as Ambassador to Hungary At the end of a long conversation, Mr Rakosi, the Hungarian Prime Minister, told me, 'Mr. Ambassador', you are at liberty to tell the Press whatever I told you Only please don't tell them that I looked very fit!

In death Stalin has undergone many vicissitudes For a couple of years his body lay embalmed by the side of Lenin's in the Red Square, and the Lenin Mausoleum was renamed Lenin-Stalin Mausoleum Then his body was removed from the mausoleum and buried in the grounds of the Kremlin By 1970 a marble bust of his appeared unobtrusively behind the Lenin Mausoleum, by the side of the busts of other Soviet leaders This signifies the present, and probably

permanent, appraisal of Stalin in the Soviet Union He is regarded as a great Soviet leader who rendered meritorious services to the Soviet state and to Communism at a critical juncture in the history of both, and in the process made some grievous mistakes If a Shah Commission were to be appointed it would doubtless call them not mistakes but crimes But the Russians are not a masochistic people and they do not wash their dirty linen in public

(Feature Unit, 1978)

6. Nicholas Roerich: A Many-Splendoured Man

It is but rarely that a man is held in as much esteem, admiration and affection in other countries as in his own

Nicholas Roerich was one such The centenary of his birth which fell on October 9, 1974, is being celebrated in leading countries in three continents in Russia where he was born and brought up, in India, which he made his home for the last 20 years of his life, and in the USA, which has the largest collection of his paintings, housed in a twentynine-storeyed building in New York, which was erected in his honour in 1929

Nicholas Roerich was a man of inter-continental fame, because he was a man of super-continental dimensions As someone said, continents were to him what provinces are to lesser men At a time when the world had not shrunk as it has today and travel was not so easy or speedy, Roerich flitted from one country to another, from one continent to another and found himself at home everywhere

Yet Roerich was a Russian in every fibre of his being The Slav soul, like the Indian soul, has always yearned for the infinite This yearning has taken different forms in different ages Why, the attempt to establish communism is itself a manifestation of this yearning the yearning to grasp Utopia by the neck and bring it down from the clouds, or, to use Biblical language, to establish the Kingdom of God on earth In this process, God himself may recede to the background, but what does it matter if His kingdom prevails? Not the Kingdom of God in a credal sense, but in the sense of a society in which there will be no exploitation and men and women will endeavour to observe those elementary virtues on which the prophets of all ages and all climes have laid stress

As an artist Roerich fulfilled his yearning for the infinite by his grand paintings of the Himalayas which soar into the empyrean defying the march of time. 'I am proud', said Roerich, 'that I have been destined to glorify the sacred Himalayas in my pictures Loving India as I do and being a Russian I am happy that the Himalayas have been praised in the history of Russian art with love and respect'

Roerich also had a messianic sense of mission which the greatest Russians have always had, such as Leo Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Maxim Gorky and Lenin Hence his crusade for peace He was particularly concerned at the possible destruction of great works of art and historical monuments in war As early as 1904 Roerich proposed to the Society of Architects in Russia his plan for the creation of the Banner and Pact of Peace Again, in 1914, he submitted it to the State authorities Under the Pact all buildings flying the Banner of Peace designed by Roerich would be immune from attack

This Pact was ratified by three dozen States at the international convention of the Pact and Banner of Peace held in Washington in 1933 And the Banner is to be placed by the Soviet Government at the top of the second highest peak in the Altai range which is to be named after Roerich

If Roerich was a Russian to the tips of his fingers, he also suffered for being Russian In 1924 he organised a scientific expedition, which lasted for nearly five years across the heart of Asia, the Roof of the World, from Sikkim through Tibet, Sinkiang and Mongolia to Russia At that time the anti-communist fever was at its height Churchill was inveighing against 'the foul buffoonery of communism', and Poincare against 'that howling wilderness of communism, Russia' The British Government of India suspected Roerich as a Russian spy, 'the bearer of the communist menace' They, therefore, prodded the Tibetan authorities, and in those days Tibet was under the thumb of Great Britain, to harass the Roerich expedition Let Roerich himself speak of what he and his companions suffered

'In spite of our possessing Tibetan passports the expedition was stopped by the Tibetan administration by force on October 6th, two days to the north of Nagchu With inhuman callousness it was detained for five months at an altitude of 15,000 feet above sea level, with members of the expedition having to live in summer tents while the temperature was 40 degrees below zero They suffered from a shortage of food and fuel Five men, Buryat mongols and Tibetans, died during their stay in Tibet and ninety animals perished On an order of the authorities all the letters and telegrams, addressed to the Lhasa government, to the American Consul in Calcutta and to the British administration were withheld Members of the expedition were also forbidden to buy food from the local population. Our money and medicines were exhausted The fact of the presence of three women among the members who had medical certificates testifying to their suffering from heart disease was not taken into account It was with

great difficulty that the expedition was at last permitted to proceed southwards on March 4th'

If Russia was Roerich's homeland, India was his chosen home 'I shall always think of India', said Roerich, 'with the same feeling of joy as of the first flower upon a spring meadow'

Roerich might always be said to have had hereditary connections with India His family estate in Leningrad was known as 'Iswara', the holiest of holy names in Hinduism Roerich says that an Indian prince used to live close to it in the time of Catherine the Great, and traces of a Mughal park remained till the days of his childhood He also says that his wife's uncle went to India in the middle of the 19th century and subsequently appeared at a ball in the Court of St Petersburg in a beautiful Rajput costume

Roerich has said that as a child he was attracted by an old painting of an imposing mountain in the possession of his family, which he subsequently learned to be Mt Kanchenjunga, the second highest peak in the Himalayas The boy who admired the picture of Kanchenjunga was destined to be the greatest painter of the Himalayas 'When you look at these paintings', said Jawaharlal Nehru, 'you seem to catch the spirit of those mountains which have towered over the Indian plain and been our sentinels for ages past We cannot help feeling a great sense of indebtedness to Nicholas Roerich who has enshrined the spirit of those mountains in these magnificent canvases'

Roerich spent the last 20 years of his life in India in a lovely villa in Kulu, in the foothills of the Himalayas, incessantly writing and painting His published works include twentyseven volumes and he executed 7,000 paintings, each of which was a masterpiece No one has succeeded in depicting the power, the splendour, the mystery, the vast silences and varying moods of the Himalaya mountains so well as Roerich has done in his luminous pictures

The versatility of Roerich was truly remarkable He was at once scholar, writer, painter, explorer, archaeologist, thinker and pholosopher All his activities issued from his innate humanism In the early part of the century he knew that the world was drifting towards war He depicted the tragedy which overtook mankind in some powerful pictures, the very titles of which are eloquent, such as 'Ominous signs', 'The lost angel', 'The lurid glare', 'The doomed city' and 'The city of serpants'

Beyond the present travails, however, Roerich saw the vision of a world at peace This vision, too, he enshrined in pictures with such telltale titles as 'Bridge of glory', 'Himself came' and 'The sign of

Maitreya' In 'The sign of Maitreya', we see a devout Tibetan surrounded by lofty peaks and praying to a colossal rock-hewn figure of Maitreya and there passes before his mind's eye the figure of 'the great horseman' riding across the sky in the form of a cloud The great horseman is to be the great liberator of mankind

Thus Roerich was at once a realist and an idealist. a realist who saw all too clearly the perils and dismays of humanity, and an idealist in cherishing and nourishing the hope for a brighter future He was indefatigable in promoting the friendship between peoples of different races and different religions In particular he promoted the friendship between the peoples of India and Russia He was, as Dr Kalidas Nag said, 'the first Russian ambassador of beauty who brought to India the deathless message of art and thus brought the soul of Russia and India together'

Roerich died in 1947, the year when India attained freedom If he had lived for another quarter of a century, he would have rejoiced to see India and Russia drawing closer together in every field of human activity and concluding, in the grimmest hour of independent India's history, the momentous Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

Maxim Gorky described Roerich as 'one of the greatest intuitive minds of our age' An all-embracing intuition lay at the base of his art 'His art', says an eminent critic, 'knows no limitations of time and space, for he envisages the universe in its past, present and future as a unit, a continuous song, binding the stone age to the age of electricity'

The age of electricity has given way to the age of the atom In the atomic age the dangers for civilisation have multiplied a hundredfold So have the prospects for man's happiness The life of Roerich who, with a brush and pen, mightier than the sword, carved out a path of beauty in the thicket of life, is an even greater source of inspiration in this harsh atomic age than in his own period

(*The Sunday Standard*, 1974.)

7. Somerset Maugham: The Man and the Writer

This year sees the centenary of the birth of two outstanding men, outstanding in different ways, who were born in the same year, 1874, and died in the same year, 1965 Both Winston Churchill and Somerset Maugham were born in the heyday of the Victorian era, lived through the reigns of two Edwards, VII and VIII, and two Georges, V and VI, and died in the reign of Queen Elizabeth The passage from the Victorian to the Elizabethan age was more than chronological, it was also psychological, and both contributed in different ways to the transition Perhaps Somerset Maugham was more typical of the change from one era to the other Churchill, while he moved majestically into the Elizabethan era, also harked back to the age of another Elizabeth, 400 years ago, and revived the glory of that age in what he called 'England's finest hour'

I have just been reading the manuscript of an admirable biography of Somerset Maugham by one P G N Nayar, the author of a book which has been well received, *Gems from Shakespeare* After reading it, I have come to see Maugham in a new light and to understand him better

I must confess that Somerset Maugham was not exactly my favourite author I had read some of his novels and plays and many of his short stories I enjoyed reading them and yet they left me vaguely dissatisfied

I know that marriage as an institution is in disarray, and yet I cannot bring myself to think that it is as hopeless as Somerset Maugham makes out According to him, marriage is 'the most abnormal of the relationships between man and woman . an invasion of privacy, an encroachment on individuality, the shattering of peace of mind, the interruption of independent thought and action, and the engulfment of an innocent human being into the bog of boredom ' I know something of the wiles of women Shakespeare knew infinitely more and said more in sorrow than anger

Frailty! Thy name is woman.

Yet, it is going too far to say that 'no man is quite safe from the coils of women till he's safely in his grave And even then a feminine worm probably makes a dead set at him' I was born in the polyandrous society of the Nairs and yet I hesitate to subscribe to Maugham's conclusion that 'the only solution of the marriage question is legalised polyandry.' 'Few women', says Maugham, 'can be happy with only one husband'. 'Even the most constant woman likes a change now and then'

Being a great-grandfather I know something about the generation gap, but I cannot agree with Maugham that 'Youth and age must have different codes Laws are made by staid, old men who seek unreasonably to restrain the exuberance of youth' Nor can I agree with his sweeping denunciation of democracy, however distressed I am by some aspects of its working 'What does democracy come down to?' asks Maugham 'The persuasive power of slogans invented by wily, self-seeking politicians A democracy is ruled by words, and the orator seldom has brains, and if he has, he hasn't time to use them, since all his energy has to be given to cajoling the fools on whose votes he depends'

These are opinions, and every man is entitled to his opinion, and an author must express his opinions in arresting language What jars on me is not Maugham's views, but his tendency to dwell on the seamy side of life and seemingly to relish it You enjoy his short stories when you read them and yet many of them leave a sour taste in the mouth There is a Malayalam saying, which, translated, means An elder's word and a bite of the gooseberry are alike, sour at first and sweet afterwards One's experience in reading Maugham's stories is the reverse

It may be that having been born in the Victorian age I suffer from a touch of Victorianism which is anomalous in these days of permissiveness But Maugham, too, was born in the Victorian period, when Great Britain was at the zenith of its glory and the Queen was preparing to proclaim herself Empress and Alfred Tennyson was singing the praises of the Empire, where freedom broadened down from precedent to precedent. He, however, peered beyond the Victorian and even the Edwardian and Georgian ages into our own day and foresaw, and even extolled, some of those antimonian tendencies which are causing discomfort to a much younger man like myself born a quarter of a century later

Maugham's admirers would make out that he was not merely a playwright and prose-writer but a prophet

Yet Somerset Maugham is the last man to pose as a prophet He has nothing of that inflexible rectitude which pertains to most prophets On the contrary, he says disarmingly that 'there is only one thing about which I am certain, and it is that there is very little about which one can be certain '

There is one book of Somerset Maugham, which I have read and re-read with unmixed pleasure and unqualified admiration, namely, *Of Human Bondage* That is because it is, so to say, written with the blood of his heart The writing of this book was an act of purgation on his part by giving expression to his pent-up emotions, he purged himself of the accumulated effects of an excruciating love affair, yearning and frustration, fulfilment and disillusionment, exhilaration and exasperation

Another book in which Somerset Maugham has put his inner self is *Razor's Edge* It is of special interest to us, Indians, as it forms an attempt on his part to understand Indian mysticism and the Indian way of life

'My whole soul aches for the East, for Egypt, India and Japan,' he had said in his *Merry Go Round* in 1905 His ache was partly satisfied by his visit to India at the age of 64 which resulted in *Razor's Edge* His friend, Garson Kamin, has mentioned an interesting incident, which drew an illuminating remark from Maugham

At that party in the Plaza in 1949, a silly fat woman we all know pressed close to him, slipped some of her Bloody Mary on to his lapel, and blew smoke into his face as she gushed, 'Do you know what my favourite is? The one about Isherwood Christopher Isherwood? What's it called? Wait a second Don't tell me Razor something A Razor's Edge What a book! How long did it take you to write it?' W S M , unperturbed, replies, 'Sixty years'

Reading the biography of Somerset Maugham I have come to understand the influences which moulded Maugham's life not for 60 years but for 90 His early upbringing in gay Paris, his harrowing life as an orphan in the vicarage of his sanctimonious uncle in England ('A parson is paid to preach, not to practise'), his short stature and agonising stammer ('My soul would have been quite different if I hadn't stammered or if I had been four or five inches taller'), the intoxicating success of his early plays, his disastrous love affair with the original of Mildred in *Of Human Bondage* ('I'm not lucky with women.'), his acquaintance with the haughty colonial officials of the

Far East ('It has been said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playfields of Eton, it will probably be said that the British Empire was lost in the Public Schools of England'), the impact of two world wars on his mind and heart and on his own personal fortunes, and his life-long inability to be wholly English ('I am attached to England, but I have never felt at home there I have never felt entirely myself till I had put at least the Channel between my country and me'), all these strands went to the making of the multi-coloured carpet of Somerset Maugham's life, in which there are as many sombre as bright strains

Doubtless, Maugham has his failings, but who has not? Even his great friend and contemporary, Winston Churchill, had, as we Indians know only too well, his blind spots Tout compredre, tout pardonner ('To understand all is to forgive all') Forgiveness is God's prerogative, it is enough for man to try and understand his fellow-men

Somerset Maugham was a man, who, with all his failings, was a man to the tips of his fingers and never posed that he was more than a man or made in the image of God 'You know,' he said, 'I do not believe in churches and parsons and all that, but I believe in God, and I do not believe He minds much about what you do so long as you keep your end up and help a lame dog over the stile when you can'

If more people would follow this simple philosophy, the world would be a happier place to live in

(Feature Unit, 1974.)

8 Valentina Tereshkova

Recently I made the acquaintance of Valentina Tereshkova, the world's first and only woman cosmonaut It was an exhilarating experience

In India, various organisations in various places vied with one another in welcoming her In Delhi, I met and talked to her at the Foreign Secretary's dinner in her honour, at the Soviet Ambassador's reception, at a tea-party given by Chandrajit Yadav on behalf of the Indian National Congress, at my own reception on behalf of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society and at a mammoth public meeting of the citizens of Delhi, sponsored by 19 organisations Few women have left such an ineffable impression on me

I must confess that initially I approached her with a certain amount of awe Here was a person who has made history, who, in the company of half a dozen kindred spirits, Russian and American, has turned over a new leaf not merely in the history of the world but in the history of the universe Here was a person who has helped to fulfil man's immemorial dream to reach out to the moon and the stars, who has vindicated the prophecy of eminent scientists that a day would come when man would free himself from the law of gravity and rise into space 'The earth', said Tsiolkovsky, the great Russian scientist of the 18th century, 'is man's best cradle, but man cannot always live in a cradle'

In May, 1961, Yuri Gagarin, the world's first cosmonaut, showed that man need not always live in a cradle Four years later, Valentina Tereshkova showed that woman need not live in a cradle, either In fact, she showed that women could surpass the feats of men While Gagarin flew round the earth in orbit once, Valentina did so 48 times and stayed in space for 70 hours A truly awesome feat.

Yet, Valentina herself does not emit awe, but a disarming simplicity The world's adoration has not spoiled her Fame, 'that last infirmity of noble minds', has left her untouched She has performed a superhuman feat and yet remains thoroughly human Once Heine, the German philosopher, took his young son to see a glittering military

parade Having watched the soldiers marching and goose-stepping with mechanical precision, the boy turned to his father and asked 'Father, were these soldiers once men?'

No one would ask whether Valentina was once a woman She remains a woman to the tips of her delicate fingers She has all those qualities which constitute womanliness at its best, gentleness, tenderness, compassion, courage, endurance and fortitude

Valentina Tereshkova is an example of the radical change which the Revolution of 1917 has brought about in the position of women in Russia Before the Revolution women were, to use a modern euphemism, among the underprivileged classes Many professions were closed to them A woman could not enter even the medical profession Recently, I underwent an operation in Moscow, and the surgeon who operated on me was a woman When I was being smoothly and brilliantly and painlessly operated on by Vera Petrovna under local anaesthetic I thought of Lenin's sister who had been keen to become a doctor but was told that the medical profession was not for women Today, 80 per cent of the doctors of the Soviet Union are women

Not only in Russia, but elsewhere in the world women generally belonged to the underprivileged classes, except in matriarchal Kerala where it was the men who were underprivileged In China, a woman was enjoined to follow 'the Three Obediences' obedience to the father in childhood, to the husband in youth, and to the son in old age Our own law-giver, Manu, gave exactly the same prescription for women

'A woman is under the protection of her father in childhood, of her husband in youth and of her son in old age A woman does not deserve freedom'

The position of women in Europe, too, was unenviable In the Middle Ages, woman was exalted into an ethereal being, a goddess, but a goddess who could not be trusted, and therefore man invented the chastity belt to keep her out of mischief In the Victorian period she was treated as an agreeable doll, or, as Tennyson, the most Victorian of poets, said,

A little better than my dog,
A little dearer than my horse

No wonder women in England, calling themselves suffragettes, had to go about breaking chairs and tables, and sometimes heads, in their campaign to get the vote for Parliament

In Russia and in India, women did not have to resort to such tactics Fortunately, there arose in Russia Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, and in India Mahatma Gandhi, both of whom believed in the absolute equality of men and women Lenin once said that as long as half the population remained as domestic drudges all talk of democracy, let alone socialism, would be just nonsense More than any other woman Valentina Tereshkova has demonstrated how unjust it is to treat women as the weaker sex

A lesser woman, having accomplished such a heroic feat, would have rested on her laurels But not Valentina She has thrown herself into all good causes She is now the indefatigable Chairman of the influential Soviet Committee of Women It was at the invitation of the Federation of Indian Women that Valentina Tereshkova recently visited India In India she flitted from one place to another—Delhi today, Calcutta tomorrow and Bombay the day after—as if she was still flying in space She had to make dozens of speeches Wherever she spoke, she dwelt, with the utmost sincerity and fervour, on the value of Indo-Soviet friendship

Valentina was once asked to give a summary of her life-story. She said that her story was no different from that of thousands of Soviet women who had made good. Her father was a tractor-driver, who died during the Second World War, leaving a wife and three children. With the utmost difficulty Valentina's mother brought up the three children Valentina herself used to work in a cotton spinning factory, but was inspired by the exploit of Gagarin in 1961 to become a cosmonaut And now she has a husband, also a brilliant cosmonaut, and a daughter aged 8, to look after And that's that, she said, with charming simplicity

Sitting next to this radiant creature, who is half my age, I wondered what she would look like when she reaches my age, that is, in 2010 A D She would still be young, for, contrary to the old adage, a woman, too, like a man, is as old (or young) as she feels, and not merely as she looks And Valentina is very definitely a woman of feeling To unborn generations she will be a symbol of emancipated womanhood, emancipated from man's domination and yet retaining the abounding grace of femininity

(*Youth Times*, 1973)

9. Philosopher as Diplomat

In 1950 when Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit, our first Ambassador to the USSR, relinquished her appointment in Moscow in order to go to Washington, the question arose as to who should succeed her Many names came under consideration, including those of Sardar K M Panikkar, who was then our Ambassador in Peking, and Devdas Gandhi, Editor of *The Hindustan Times* Jawaharlal Nehru himself was inclined to appoint Dr Radhakrishnan to Moscow

Some people thought that it would be odd to send an idealistic philosopher, and a vegetarian and teetotaller to boot, to the land of dialectical materialism I happened to be Foreign Secretary then and Nehru consulted me I had no hesitation in supporting Dr Radhakrishnan

I had met Dr Radhakrishnan in 1931 in Ceylon, where I was the Indian Representative. The speech which he made in Colombo on 'The Legacy of Buddha' still remains in my mind as the most brilliant speech I have ever heard I came into closer contact with him when he came in 1946 on a fortnight's goodwill mission to China, where I was India's Agent-General, and travelled with him from Chungking to Chengtu His was a triumphal tour He left an indelible impression on Chinese minds not merely as a philosopher and an orator but as a man I felt that the Russians, too, would take to him

The Russians did indeed do so They were pleased with the appointment of a world-renowned philosopher as India's Representative Moreover, they knew his impeccable record as a nationalist True, he had been knighted by the British Government, but that was in recognition of his eminence as a scholar Before recommending him for a Knighthood, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, consulted the Governor of Bengal, as Dr Radhakrishnan was then teaching at the Calcutta University His reply was 'All the police reports are against him, but I like him'

The Soviet people liked him Stalin received him soon after his arrival and had a cordial talk with him He received him again before his departure from Moscow as Vice-President-designate of India Unlike

Khrushchev, who was ready to see every Tom and Harry, Stalin saw but few diplomats To have been received by Stalin, therefore, was a special honour; and this ensured that the Foreign Office, too, would treat him with special deference Stalin's reception of Dr Radhakrishnan was also a recognition, on the part of the USSR, of the potential geo-political importance of India which, incidentally, the USA seems still reluctant to recognise, except in words

Even before Stalin received Dr Radhakrishnan, the Soviet Government showed its approval of his appointment by the promptitude with which it arranged for the presentation of his credentials The length of time which a Government takes to receive the credentials of an Ambassador is generally an index to the degree of the friendship between the two countries One recalls how President Nixon kept our Ambassador, L K Jha, waiting for an unconscionably long time before he received him On the contrary, Kalinin, the Head of the Soviet State, received Dr Radhakrishnan within a few days of his arrival Lamping, then Ambassador of the Netherlands in Moscow, had to wait in Moscow for 6 months before he could present his credentials

The diplomatic corps in Moscow regarded Dr Radhakrishnan as a strange phenomenon He was the most unconventional diplomat who ever served in Moscow For instance, he would receive his fellow-Ambassadors in his bed-room Once, Churchill gave the following advice to a friend who was leaving England to take up a high appointment in the East 'In the Orient', said Churchill, 'if you have a chance of sitting, do not stand, and if you have chance of lying down, do not sit' Dr Radhakrishnan followed this precept He spent most of his time in bed, reading and writing and translating the Brahmopanishad I had the privilege of succeeding him in Moscow; and I found on the back of the bed in the Embassy, the stain left by the hairoil on his head

Dr Radhakrishnan was irked by the rules of protocol, to which diplomats are generally apt to pay excessive importance For instance, diplomats are expected to leave a banquet in strict order of precedence, under no circumstances should a junior ambassador leave before the doyen does Dr Radhakrishnan believed in the adage

Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise

Diplomats, on the contrary, seldom retire before midnight, a habit to which I am still addicted. By 10 P M Dr Radhakrishnan would

begin to be impatient, as a sign of his impatience he would begin tapping the table, then he would hum a sloka from the *Gita*, and finally he would rise and go up to the host, protocol or no protocol, and take leave of him And his colleagues would nudge one another and say 'There goes the philosopher!'

Our philosopher-diplomat, however, sowed more goodwill in Moscow than the professional diplomats of other countries He kept himself above the dust and din of diplomacy and the drudgery of office work Fortunately he had, as his Minister-Counsellor, Yezdi Gundevia, a very able Foreign Service Officer, who took complete charge of the chancery With his charming wife, Rokshi, he also looked after the social side of diplomatic life

In those days, the cold war was rife Both sides were apt to think, 'He that is not with me is against me ' The Soviet Union welcomed the independence of India, but it was not sure whether India would be really independent or whether it would continue to be tied economically to the chariot-wheels of the West Many people in India, too, suffered from the aftermath of a generation of intensive British propaganda against the Soviet Union The circumstances, therefore, were not favourable for Dr Radhakrishnan to make much headway in the relations between India and the Soviet Union He, however, by his gracious personality and unfathomable goodwill, paved the way for the development of Indo-Soviet relations on a most impressive scale after Stalin's death, which occurred not long after he left Moscow

How meagre Indo-Soviet relations were in Dr Radhakrishnan's time may be gauged from the fact that, while holding the post of Ambassador in Moscow, he retained the post of Professor of Comparative Religion at Oxford In fact, he used to spend half the year at Oxford and the other half in Moscow But, as I wrote in one of my letters to the Government of India, the day was coming when it would no longer be possible to combine philosophy and diplomacy, Oxford and Moscow

The position held by Dr. Radhakrishnan in Moscow shows that what counts in an Ambassador is not simply, or primarily, what he does but what he is It has been said, 'He is truly great who is not afraid to be himself ' Dr Radhakrishnan was a faithful representative of his country which, too, is not afraid to be itself. And that is the essence of non-alignment

(*Indian Express*, 1975)

10. Memories of Jawaharlal Nehru

The first time that I set eyes on Jawaharlal Nehru was in Kandy, in 1931, when he paid a visit to Ceylon with his wife and daughter

Fifteen years passed before I met him again He had just formed the interim Government of India And I had just done an overland journey on foot and on horseback from India to China, and written a book called *Delhi-Chungking* I asked Nehru whether he would be good enough to write an Introduction to it One of the busiest of men, he read through the galley proofs after the day's work, in the small hours of the morning, and wrote a charming Introduction, reflecting, as I said in my Preface, 'the wistfulness, the weariness and the unconquerable hopefulness of a man of action who is also a man of dreams' These characteristics which set him apart from humdrum politicians he retained to the end of his life

Nehru imported a sense of urgency into the Secretariat In the palmy days of British rule, the ICS used to be characterised by what Richard Symonds has called 'leisurely perfectionism' Nehru too was a perfectionist But his perfectionism was far from leisurely A thousand things had to be done, and done quickly Nehru himself set an example of hard work He would come to the office punctually at 9 in the morning and stay till after 7 in the evening He started coming to office even on Sundays We told him that he should have rest on at least one day of the week

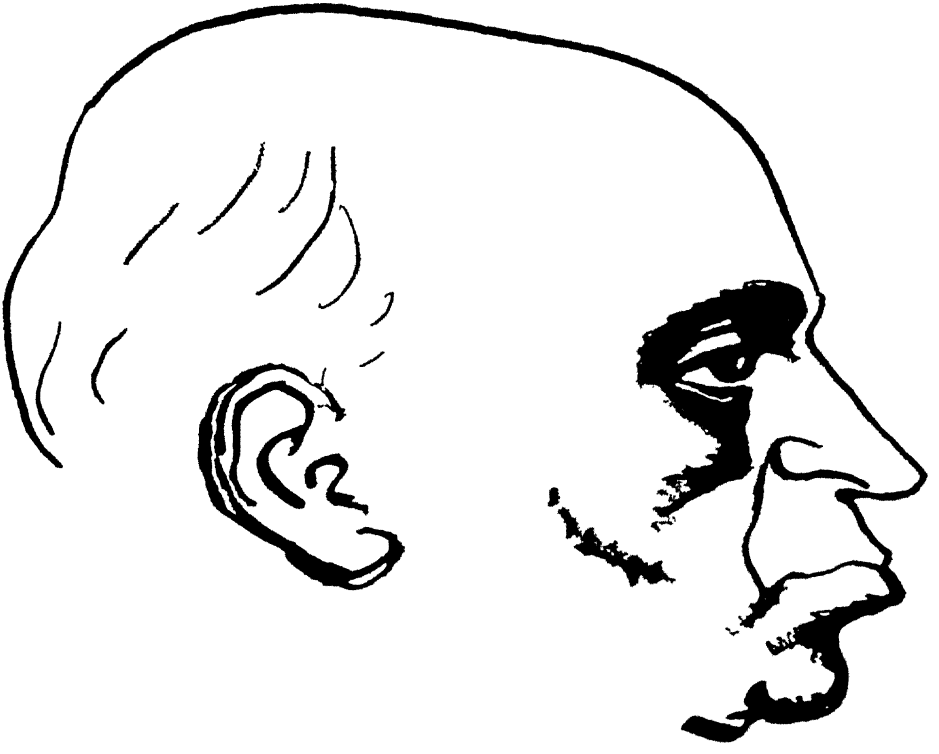
'Nonsense', he said, 'I don't want any rest'

Then we changed our tactics

'If you come', I said, 'others will have to come too—the stenographers, personal assistants, chaprassis, etc This is rather hard on them'

This argument appealed to Nehru He relented and, as a great concession, he agreed not to come to office on Sunday afternoons

Though India had not attained Dominion Status, Nehru was determined, from the beginning, to show that it was going to take its destinies into its own hands Soon after he assumed office, the question arose whether India should take part in a preliminary meeting of



the Commonwealth countries before proceeding to an international trade meeting The Commerce Ministry was of the opinion that India should attend the Commonwealth meeting, and I supported the proposal I explained to Nehru that our attendance could do no harm and might be of some use He kept quiet for a few seconds and asked

'Are you a horseman, K P S ?'

'Yes, sir', I said, 'I ride a little'

'Of course, you rode all the way from India to China You must know that it is always the first few minutes which count with a horse, then the horse will decide who is to be the master, it or the rider'

Before long the whole world knew who was to be the rider There was no longer any need for India to flaunt its independence At the same time, it was clear that independent India was not hostile to Britain India freely decided to remain, as a Republic, in the Commonwealth Even Churchill recognised Nehru's greatness On his return from his official visit to the USA in 1950, Nehru stopped for a few days in England and was introduced by Attlee, then Prime Minister, to Churchill, the Leader of the Opposition Churchill's first words to Nehru were

'I would have liked to be with you and introduced you to American audiences Do you know how I would have introduced you I would have said, "Here's a man who has overcome fear and hatred" '

'Thank you', said Nehru 'That is high praise'

'Yes', said Churchill, 'and I am not saying it on the spur of the moment I have been thinking about it and I mean it'

It is well known that our foreign policy owes its inspiration to the intuition of one man, Jawaharlal Nehru It was he who set the goals and charted the course for independent India in both internal and external affairs with the motto, democracy, secularism, non-alignment and a socialistic pattern of society He, however, left its day-to-day working to us, permanent officials of the Foreign Office, but we always discussed the more important matters with him, and all important drafts were submitted to him With uncanny accuracy, he would put his finger on the weak points in a draft and correct it or rewrite it when necessary

To work with a chief like Nehru was sheer joy Sometimes something would strike him which had not struck us and which even seemed to us quaint On one occasion, I brought to his notice the conduct of a non-career diplomat which I thought was improper 'But I would put him in charge of a guerilla band!', said Nehru, laughing. On another occasion I told him of the amusing incident of a princess for

whose wedding the Government of India had sent valuable presents and who, it was noticed on the occasion of the wedding, was already enceinte 'What does it matter', said Nehru, 'it shows that they are a civilised people!'

Nehru was too great to pay attention to petty matters During his official visit to the Soviet Union I gave a banquet in his honour and invited Khrushchev, Bulganin and all the other members of the Presidium I wrote to Nehru beforehand and asked him whether I was at liberty to offer drinks, after all, the Russians did not enjoy their meals without them, and vodka was their national drink Nehru replied that he had no objection to drinks being served, except 'that vulgar drink', whisky On the contrary, when Morarji Desai came as Finance Minister to the USSR I was expressly warned by his Private Secretary not only not to offer drinks at my party in his honour, but not to drink at the Russian parties in his honour

I have never seen Nehru in a more ebullient and, indeed, more exultant mood than during the three weeks of his memorable visit to the Soviet Union in 1955 His first visit to the USSR was in 1927 He naturally observed the great changes, amounting to a virtual transformation of society, which had occurred in less than four decades In 1927, the ordinary mode of transport in Moscow used to be the *drozhki* Nehru wondered how anybody could go about in such an uncomfortable vehicle Now the *drozhki* had disappeared So had the wooden plough It was as if the bullock-cart were to disappear from the Indian scene

No longer were there in Moscow any anti-God processions or demonstrations as the ones Nehru saw in 1927 Nor was there any controversy as to the validity of marriage in a Communist society In 1927, many people, wrote Nehru, believed in the glass of water theory, that is that to satisfy the craving for sex should be as simple as quenching your thirst with a glass of water That is alright, said Lenin, but nobody wants to drink from a glass of water from which a dozen others have drunk That settled the matter once and for all

Nehru, the great lover of children that he was—his birthday is still celebrated as Children's Day—noted the lavish affection bestowed on Soviet children, the amount of thought given to their upbringing and education and their general demeanour, at once inquisitive and deferential, entirely free from all inhibitions And the children joined the elders in entertaining him At the great international sanatorium in Artek they showed off their talents in music, dancing and gymnastics On his return to India, as a token of his affection for Soviet children,

he sent them two baby elephants named Ravi and Shashi, the Sun and the Moon, together with a charming message That message is inscribed in three languages — English, Russian and Ukrainian, at the entrance to the Zoo in Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine In sending the message to me for transmission, he wrote to me 'These elephants are two ambassadors from India, apart of course from yourself, only they will be specially accredited to the children of the Soviet Union'

Nehru had many serious discussions with Soviet leaders on world affairs Never did he say one word, simply to humour his hosts, in condemnation or even disparagement of the Western Powers I recall a Conference at which Prime Minister Bulganin began by referring to the renewed machinations of the USA in Indo-China even after the Geneva Conference of 1954 America still seemed determined to adhere to a policy of playing from strength, was it any use, asked Bulganin, to negotiate with such people? Nehru replied that there might be some people in America who behaved in this manner, but there were also many liberal elements in American society Even the bellicose were sensible enough to realise that in this nuclear age war would be disastrous The path of wisdom, said Nehru, lay in carrying the more enlightened elements with us and not in alienating them Towards the end of the Conference, Bulganin said that if Western Europe and America were really like what Nehru represented them to be, there would be some hope for the peace of the world Nehru conveyed his impressions of the latest developments in the Soviet Union to the British Government Soon after the Summit Conference in Geneva in 1956, which resulted in a remarkable reduction in tensions, the British Foreign Secretary told Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit, our High Commissioner in London, that throughout the Conference the British representatives were guided by Nehru's estimate of Soviet policies

Looking back at the events of the last twenty years one cannot but feel that there was an element of wishful thinking on Nehru's part Nevertheless, he reinforced the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence and helped in bringing about a rapprochement between the East and the West which, in the time of Mr Brezhnev, has ripened into a great detente between the Great Powers Seeing Nehru closetted with foreign dignitaries I often used to think to myself here's not only a great national leader, but a statesman of world stature, and yet a man who has a child's simplicity and a woman's tenderness

Towards the end of his life, Nehru had lost something of his old ebullience. In February, 1964, I had lunch with him and his daughter

The other guest was T N Kaul, my successor in Moscow, and then our Ambassador to the USA When Nehru saw me hobbling in with my walking stick, for I had just fractured my leg, he looked surprised I said to him 'This is what I am reduced to, sir ' After a pause he said 'I am somewhat reduced, too ' There was pathos in what he said He had been always proud of his health, he had never suspected that illness would reduce his capacity for work Once, in 1947, he told me that he had a bad headache 'Why not have an aspirin?', I said 'You know, K P S ,' he said, 'I have a singularly unmedicated body ' Whenever the doctors tried to medicate him, he rebelled Col Rao, his physician, told me that three or four years earlier Nehru had an attack of influenza, and as soon as he recovered he insisted, against medical advice, on proceeding to South India on electioneering campaign Rao then implored him to take a doctor with him 'You may be good doctors but you are bad psychologists', said Nehru. 'How can I go to the people and ask for their votes with a doctor in attendance?'

The last time I saw Nehru was in March, 1964 Mrs Indira Gandhi was good enough to ask us to a music recital by Vilayat Khan in the Prime Minister's study It was sad to see Nehru He walked with difficulty, and his elan had gone out of him But he still continued to work, he still had 'promises to keep' It would have been unbearable to see him gradually sinking into senility as another redoubtable man of our time, Churchill, had done. Nehru died exactly as he would have wished—in harness But such men cannot die Nehru's spirit will continue to inspire untold generations to come And my own heart will throb with memories of him until my heart, too, ceases to throb

(All India Radio, 1975)

11. The Pandit and the Sardar

Much has been said about the relations between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Both made a mighty contribution, next only to Mahatma Gandhi's, to the cause of Indian independence—not only to the winning of independence but to its consolidation as well

Nehru laid down the fundamental principles of new India's policy, internal and external, namely democracy, secularism, non-alignment and a socialistic pattern of society The Sardar's greatest achievement was the integration of the Princely States into India This has given India an administrative unity which it had never possessed before and earned for him the title 'The Bismark of India'

Nehru and Patel were men of very different temperaments I, as Foreign Secretary, had little to do with Patel, who was Home Minister and Minister for (Princely) States My only contact with him was in his capacity as member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, which I invariably attended At its meetings, the Sardar spoke little, confirming his reputation as a strong silent man Occasionally he would come out with a remark which showed how his mind was working Often his mind worked differently from Nehru's Yet as the first Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively of independent India Nehru and Patel worked in harmony for the good of the country

I shall relate some incidents that throw light on the character of the two men and the fruitful partnership between them

1950 There is a crisis in Nepal For a hundred years Nepal had been under the rule of the Ranas who had reduced the King to a figure-head Now the King puts himself at the head of a popular movement and seeks asylum in the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and eventually in India The Ranas depose him and anoint his infant grandson as the King of Nepal This would have ensured the continuance of Rana rule for at least two more decades

The Foreign Affairs Committee discusses whether the infant King should be recognised as the ruler of Nepal The British government is

inclined to do so Nehru takes a different view He feels that the King's espousal of the popular cause should be taken at its face value and that he should be enabled to go back to Nepal as King Patel observes that Nepal is a frontier state, that stability is the paramount consideration there and that the Ranas are in a better position to ensure stability than anyone else However, Nehru's view prevails The British government, too, falls in line with India's policy The King goes back to Nepal, and the rule of the Ranas comes to an end

Briefly, Patel stood primarily for stability and Nehru for freedom

1951 Britain has left India, and France is on the point of leaving its Indian settlements Portugal, however, is determined to hang on to its settlements—Goa, Daman and Diu The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet meets in order to discuss what measures should be taken to compel Portugal to relinquish its hold on Goa, etc Apart from myself as Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Commerce Secretary are also present We make certain proposals for bringing pressure to bear on the Portuguese administration in Goa, such as a curb on remittances from Goa to India, restrictions on the employment of Goans in India, etc Nehru is inclined to approve these proposals Rajaji takes an astonishing line He asserts that the Goans after all are our brothers, that nothing should be done to harass them and that they should be won over by love The discussion goes on and on Sardar Patel seems hardly interested he seems almost asleep Suddenly he wakes up and says 'Shall we go in? It is two hours' work ' Nehru is shocked at the suggestion 'How can we use force in Goa', he asks, 'we who have been condemning the use of force and insisting that all international issues should be settled through peaceful means?' Sardar Patel does not press his point, and Goa remains a Portuguese settlement for another two decades Eventually repression in Goa passes all endurable limits, India's patience is exhausted, and by the merest show of force Goa is integrated with India

Sardar Patel gives way over Nepal and Goa, because they pertain to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of which Nehru is in charge In matters connected with his own portfolio, he will not budge Let me mention a small incident Patel, as the Minister for States, recommends the inclusion of the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar as the representative of the Princes in the Indian delegation to the UN General Assembly in 1950 I submit this recommendation to Jawaharlal Nehru Nehru demurs 'I am d-d if I send him to the UN', says Nehru, 'he and his diamond buttons!' This exclamation shows Nehru's aversion to the pomp and panoply of the Princely order

Nehru asks me to go and see Patel and ask for the name of some other person to be included in the delegation 'I have made my nomination and I stick to it', says Sardar Patel Nehru accepts it

The first trade agreement between India and the Soviet Union is being drafted There is a clause for the exchange of experts and technical personnel between the two countries The draft is sent for approval to other Ministries including the Home Ministry, of which Sardar Patel is in charge H V R Iyengar, Home Secretary, comes into my room and tells me 'What are you doing, K P S ? Exchange of technical personnel with the Soviet Union! Under this clause Soviet spies and saboteurs would enter India and cause untold trouble and damage' Nehru poohpoohs there fears and the clause is retained intact Under this provision, thousands of Soviet experts and technical personnel have come to India, and there is not even a whisper of suspicion that any of them has indulged in any undesirable activities They conform to the law of the land in every way They conform even to the law of prohibition A hard thing for a Russian to do!

1950 The Korean War is on General MacArthur, having cleared South Korea of the North Korean invaders, crosses the 38th Parallel without any authorisation from the UN and pushes his victorious troops to the Yalu river separating Korea from China China then intervenes in the War and mows down American G I s by the thousand Infuriated, the USA resorts to the bombing of Korea We receive a letter from K K Chettur, our Ambassador to Japan, giving a vivid description of the bombing and the damage caused by it and the indiscriminate killing of innocent men, women and children Nehru reads out the letter with indignation Sardar Patel listens impassively and asks 'Who has written this letter? Is he a Jain?'

In saying this, Sardar Patel implies that after all war is war, and non-violence, which lies at the root of Jainism, has no relevance to it

These instances show how different was the temperament of the two men Yet, sinking their differences and avoiding friction, they worked wholeheartedly for the uplift of our country

(*Bhavan's Journal*, 1976)

PART II

INDIA—PAST AND PRESENT

12 'The Volcano is Extinct'

My relations with V K Krishna Menon have gone through various phases I have experienced, towards him, a whole gamut of emotions, beginning with irritation and exasperation and ending with deep respect and admiration, and an affection which, I believe, was mutual

My first meeting with V K Krishna Menon was at the United Nations in September 1946. Soon after Jawaharlal Nehru formed the interim Government of India in 1946, he included us both in the Indian Delegation to the First General Assembly of the UN

Krishna and I, though Keralites, belonged to different worlds I belonged to a Service which used to be ironically called 'the Heaven-born Service' He was an 'agitator' which in those days meant a patriot This need not necessarily have been a barrier between us, because I worked with the greatest 'agitator' of them all, Jawaharlal Nehru, and adored him. I served him for sixteen years as Ambassador to China, before it went Communist, as Foreign Secretary and as Ambassador in Moscow for nearly nine years Not for one moment did I feel ill at ease with him Nor with his daughter, Mrs Indira Gandhi I have also felt perfectly at ease with political figures of such different persuasions as Rajaji, Kamaraj, Dr V V Giri, Sardar Swaran Singh, C Achutha Menon and E M S Namboodiripad, though I never go out of my way to chum up with politicians

Krishna Menon, to use slang, was a different cup of tea He seemed to think that every ICS man belonged to 'the opposite camp' Once I had a row with him in the presence of the entire Indian Delegation and to their dismay I have related the incident in my autobiography, *Many Worlds*, and concluded by saying 'Whenever I am in the presence of Krishna Menon, I recall Talleyrand's remark about Napoleon "How unfortunate that so great a man should have been so badly brought up!" However, I added, "In the perspective of history Napoleon is infinitely greater than Talleyrand" '

Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the leader of our Delegation, faithfully reported this incident to Nehru On my return to Delhi after the UN session Jawaharlal Nehru said with a smile 'I see the two Menons

could not get on with each other ' I told him that I was the sort of fellow who could get on with anybody but I found Krishna Menon insufferable Nehru then gave a long disquisition on men and things The world, he said, consisted of all manner of men There were some people of great talents but somehow their talents remained unused and then they became bitter and frustrated It was necessary to harness them, too to the service of the nation

How wise Nehru was! Krishna's services to the nation—not to our nation alone — have been truly meritorious Year after year, for a whole decade, he led the Indian Delegation to the UN No more powerful voice was ever heard in the UN, it was the voice of India, nay, the voice of resurgent Asia and Africa Unequivocally Krishna condemned all acts of injustice and oppression wherever they occurred He denounced the lingering remnants of imperialism and the fitful manifestations of neo-imperialism in remorseless terms

If Krishna Menon were alive today, his voice would have rung loud and clear against the latest machinations of neo-imperialism such as the renewed attempt to dominate Asia and Africa through the establishment of a mighty naval base at Diego Garcia in the heart of the Indian Ocean, the proposed naval manoeuvres to be held in the Arabian Sea in league with Pakistan under the banner of CENTO and the talk of confrontation with the Arabs and any others who might seek to establish control over their own natural resources He would have spoken with a tongue of scorpions which would have left a sting even in the conscience of his opponents, even if it did not affect their conduct

Krishna's eloquence won the admiration of some people even in America Once the late Adlai Stevenson referred to him as 'the great representative of the great Prime Minister of a great country' By and large, however, he was intensely disliked in America During our last visit to the USA in 1964 I had to speak at various places Wherever I spoke, the chairman, in introducing me, would trot out my qualifications and end up by saying 'K P S Menon is no relation of Krishna Menon!'

As Defence Minister Krishna Menon proved himself a dynamic administrator Until then the Defence portfolio had been treated as a kind of Cinderella Krishna insisted that India should start manufacturing arms itself and took some big strides towards that end But for his initiative, imagination and tenacity India would have been even less prepared to face the conflicts of the last decade than it was

Krishna was always a lonely man In the last few years of his life he

was lonelier than ever He found himself a forlorn figure in the political arena He paid for his superb stubbornness in insisting on standing from Bombay for the Parliamentary elections, and he committed a serious tactical error in parting company with the Congress Thereafter he ceased to be a force in Indian politics, though he retained the halo of a man who had spent every ounce of his energy in supporting freedom and resisting all encroachments on it

My last meeting with Krishna was in his house on Teen Murti Marg at the end of June 1974 I went there to invite him to a melancholy function which I was to perform in Ottapalam, namely, the inauguration of an Ayurvedic Hospital, in which his sister, Padmavathi Amma, who died last year, used to live, and which, under Krishna Menon's advice, was given away for a public purpose by her husband I also wanted to invite him to preside over the commemoration of the 117th birthday of Sir C Sankaran Nair, one of the early giants of the Indian political movement and the only Keralite who had been the President of the Indian National Congress Krishna said he would have loved to come to Ottapalam but his doctors would not permit him to move 'even from my room or my bed' for some time We then talked about Sankaran Nair, and Krishna observed what a grand old man he was and how glad he (Krishna Menon) was that I had done justice to Sankaran Nair in my book about him in the *Builders of India* series, published by the Government of India Krishna said that, if invited again next year, he would try to come Alas, that was not to be Departing from the doctor's advice not to leave his room and his bed, he walked up to the car to see me off I little suspected that I was not destined to see him again.

The volcano, as Mrs Indira Gandhi said, is extinct. But the glow of the lava which poured out so copiously and brilliantly from it, overwhelming the opponents of freedom and progress and at least putting them to shame, would long remain in the memories of men and in the annals of history

(*Krishna Menon Memorial Souvenir*, 1974)

13. The Evolution of Mrs. Gandhi

(This article was written soon after our last war with Pakistan at the request of some friends and admirers of Mrs Gandhi in Bombay who wanted to publish a compilation of tributes to her called Indiravana)

Mrs Indira Gandhi has become a world figure Hers has not been a sudden debut on the world's stage but a process of gradual evolution

My first glimpse of Mrs Gandhi or, as she then was, Indira Nehru, was in Ceylon in 1931 She had come there with her parents on their last happy holiday together, for Kamala Nehru was soon snatched away by the hand of death I remember her as a young teen-ager trying to keep pace with her father who walked so briskly that he seemed to be running

Fifteen years passed before I set eyes on her again She was now a charming young woman with the added glory of accomplished motherhood, for she had just presented a grandson to her father She was determined to fill, as far as she could, the void left in her father's life by her mother's premature death. She was always there when wanted and never in the way

Indira attended to every detail of the Prime Minister's household, arranged the dinners and receptions with exquisite taste and put her guests at ease by her unobtrusive grace Not for nothing was she at Tagore's International University, Shanti Niketan, where she had her first lessons in international etiquette, and at Oxford where, as the motto of one of the oldest colleges would have it, 'Manners Makyth Man'

Prof Stephen Leacock once said that all that a degree at Oxford meant was that a man had lived at Oxford for three years and managed to keep out of jail In fact, it means more It means a sense of civilised living and civilised conduct even towards uncivilised opponents

Nehru himself was at Cambridge I remember attending an Oxford-

Cambridge dinner, at which Nehru and Indira were the chief guests It fell to me to propose the Toast to Women I said that one great quality of Jawaharlal Nehru was that when he made a mistake he admitted it He himself had been to the wrong University and made amends for it by sending his daughter to Oxford

During the years when I was Foreign Secretary it was my privilege to see Mrs Gandhi often with her father There is a theory that Jawaharlal Nehru had been sedulously grooming his daughter to be his successor I do not believe it Nehru's sister, Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit, was rising to dizzy heights in the international sphere, and Nehru did not want an unseemly rivalry to develop between his sister and his daughter Nor did he want to lend himself to the charge of nepotism Moreover, to be Nehru's hostess was a full-time job Nehru had a sense of perfection A crumpled cushion, a chair which was out of place, a curtain which had been drawn untidily, a curry which was unbearably hot, always made him angry Indira took care to see that everything was in place and in order

Indira was interested in social work, but to all appearances she was not interested in politics Indeed, she seemed a singularly apolitical being This, however, was a superficial impression She was brought up in an atmosphere of freedom and revolution and jail-going, and this could not but have left a mark on her sensitive mind And it was to her that Nehru wrote his world-surveying letters from prison

I came in close contact with Indira when she came to Moscow on a private visit in 1953 Though the visit was private, the Soviet Government made elaborate arrangements for her to visit Leningrad, Tbilisi, Yalta and Tashkent Wherever Indira went, she left the most pleasant impressions I have described the impact of her personality in my book *Russian Panorama* 'Indira and Anujee, with their sarees, attracted considerable attention Anujee could be easily placed as an Indian, but not Indira Where, the Uzbeks wondered, had Indira come from? For, despite her saree, she was so fair, had short hair and chisseled features She might come from any part of the world and yet could belong to none Indira is the kind of person whose beauty is at once individual and universal She herself is charmingly unconscious of her charm'

Mrs Gandhi came to the Soviet Union again, together with her father during his historic visit in 1955 It was a case of flowers, flowers all the way. Then she formed that intimate acquaintance with Soviet leaders which, despite changes of personnel, has persisted to the present day

Since 1955, Mrs Gandhi has visited Moscow many times Perhaps her most memorable visit was in 1967 on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the October Revolution Forty years earlier, her father, not yet forty but already an *enfant terrible* in Indian politics, had also stood in the Red Square, watching the tenth anniversary of the Revolution For him, and for India, it was a formative event He realised that the remedy for the age-old ills of India lay in vigorous planning and socialism, not any particular form of socialism, but a socialistic pattern of society He also returned convinced of the need for Indo-Soviet friendship

On her father's death in 1964, Mrs Gandhi joined Lal Bahadur Shastri's Cabinet as Minister for Information and Broadcasting Her opponents, who disliked the possibility of her becoming Prime Minister, hoped that Indira had been cut down to size

On the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri Mrs Gandhi became Prime Minister of India The 'king-makers' thought that they could contain her but were soon disillusioned The fact is that Indira is not the kind of woman who can be contained President Nixon, too, realised that the policy of containment would be no more effective in the case of Indira and India than it was towards the Soviet Union

Mrs Gandhi's Prime Ministership began with what in retrospect must be called an error of judgement, the devaluation of the rupee without taking the necessary measures to meet the new situation However, she was quick to learn a lesson from this incident Henceforward, she would not blindly accept expert advice, from however eminent a quarter it may come She would form her own independent judgement

Mrs Gandhi knew that her first task was to set her house in order With unerring instinct, she recognised that all was not well with the Congress The Congress was the one organisation which could ensure stability in India, but it had become an amorphous, heterogeneous body containing discordant elements ranging and veering from left to right and right to left, sometimes out of conviction and more often out of opportunism, and breeding defectionism and a host of other evils Unless this situation was remedied, India would be a victim of chronic political instability, leading to chaos or military dictatorship Mrs Gandhi came to the conclusion that nothing short of a surgical operation was required This she carried out by breaking with veteran colleagues who would not, or could not, see eye to eye with her in respect of her father's basic policies, and she proceeded to form a Congress after her heart, the New Congress At the last general elections, and in

the elections to the State Legislatures as well, the people showed that they stood solidly behind her

In the struggle with her colleagues, Mrs Gandhi showed that she was a woman cast in an almost Shakespearean mould Prof A C Bradley has observed in his *Shakespearean Tragedy* that what distinguished Shakespeare's heroes from his heroines is that 'the man thinks the woman acts' Jawaharlal Nehru always thought of the pros and cons of a problem and was fastidious in trying to be just to the man who held views opposite to his own and always tried to carry them too with him, little knowing that some of them were incorrigible In this way, Jawaharlal Nehru sometimes allowed 'the native hue of resolution' to be 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought' Not Mrs. Gandhi One cannot imagine her soliloquising, 'To be or not to be' Whatever the odds, she was determined to be So, she was determined, shall India be

This was demonstrated during the Bangladesh crisis, when India faced a more severe ordeal than ever before During this crisis she showed herself to be a woman who could think as well as act Every step which she took was carefully thought out, and the timing was perfect She took due note of public opinion, but did not pay undue importance to it She refused to be hustled into a premature recognition of Bangladesh, which would have done more harm than good to the cause of Bangladesh itself, nor did the anticipated criticism that she was abandoning the policy of non-alignment deter her from signing the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union Her malevolent critics argued that the Treaty was an Unequal Treaty, that it gave India in bondage to the USSR and that it would restrain India from effectively assisting Bangladesh to become a free country Such criticisms were soon shown as totally inept

Mrs Gandhi recognised the importance of world opinion and tried hard to carry it with her She made a sincere attempt to persuade even President Nixon to recognise realities by visiting him, despite the advice of some who thought that it would be beneath her dignity to go and see him after his open partiality for Pakistan and his undisguised bias against India And at the end of the war, in the hope of improving relations with the USA, she wrote a civilised letter to him, cogent, trenchant, and appealing—a letter which will go down to posterity as one of the great letters of history. Unfortunately, it had no effect on Nixon According to newspaper reports, Nixon's reply was brusquely handed over by the State Department not to our Ambassador in Washington but to his deputy, who was not even offered a seat when

he was asked to call at the State Department to take it How right Edmund Burke was when he said 'Great empires (or republics) and little minds go ill together!"

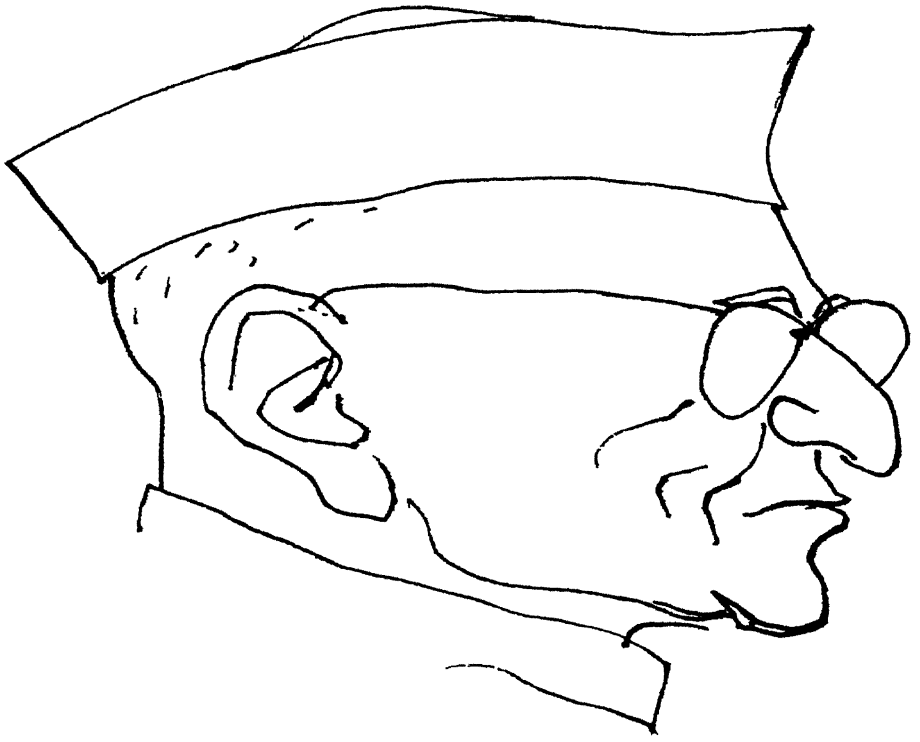
(*The National Herald*, 1975)

14. Interview with Morarji Desai

I called on Prime Minister Morarji Desai in October, 1977 By that time he had been Prime Minister for nearly seven months I did not trouble him earlier because I make it a point not to approach Ministers and high dignitaries unless I have some specific business with them I realise that they are among the busiest of men I have never cared to call on them simply, as the saying goes, to pay my respects to them Once a visitor called at the office of one Marjoribanks, an ICS man who was acting as Governor of Madras, and sent in a chit noting his business as 'to pay my respects' Marjoribanks returned the card saying 'taken as paid' Politicians, unlike bureaucrats, cannot afford to be so brusque All the more reason why they should not be needlessly troubled

I called on the Prime Minister for a specific purpose in my capacity as Chairman of the Central Soviet Land Nehru Award Committee These Awards, carrying, in the case of the highest, an honorarium of Rs 10,000 and a free fortnight's trip to the Soviet Union and back, were instituted by the Soviet authorities soon after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru as a tribute to his memory The first two Awards were given posthumously to Rabindranath Tagore and Mahakavi Vallathol Many of our greatest writers have been recipients of these Awards They are given on the basis of the recommendations of the Central Nehru Award Committee, of which I have been Chairman since its inception and Mrs Indira Gandhi was the Patron The Patron of the corresponding Committee in the Soviet Union, which decides on the annual Awards to distinguished Soviet citizens who have promoted Indo-Soviet friendship in the sphere of art, literature or culture is Prime Minister Kosygin It was felt that Prime Minister Morarji Desai should now be the Patron of the Committee, and I was entrusted with the task of approaching him

There was a feeling among some of my colleagues that Mr Morarji Desai might refuse to accept the position of the Patron of the Nehru Award Committee, as the new government was out to debunk Nehru Mr Desai's response showed how groundless this apprehension was



Very readily he accepted my request His only question was 'What am I to do as Patron!' I said nothing, all he had to do was to approve of the recommendations made by the Nehru Award Committee, subject to any changes he wished to make I showed him the list of Awards for this year He said that he did not know many of the awardees He was pleased to see that one of the Awards had been given to one of his veteran colleagues in Parliament, Hiren Mukerji Of all the numerous books written about Jawaharlal Nehru, none is more graceful and percipient than Hiren's book called *The Gentle Colossus* If Nehru was the gentle Colossus, Hiren may be called the gentle Communist

My interview with Mr Desai took place on the eve of his departure for the Soviet Union His Secretary had telephoned to me and said that it was with great difficulty that he managed to squeeze in this interview on a very busy day, that the P M had his dinner at 7 30 p m and that he (the Secretary) hoped that I would not take more than six or seven minutes of his time Actually the interview lasted for more than half an hour For this I was not responsible

Mr Desai was in a relaxed, reminiscental mood He spoke with great appreciation of his last visit to the USSR in 1960 when he was Finance Minister and of the warmth and hospitality which his Soviet hosts had extended to him I was the Indian Ambassador at that time and it was the talk among diplomats how the Soviet government had gone out of its way to treat Mr Desai as more than a mere Cabinet Minister They accommodated him in a lovely villa in the vicinity of the houses of the Members of the Presidium and placed a special plane at his disposal for his tours in the Soviet Union

I called on Mr Desai again on his return from the USSR That too was for a specific purpose I invited him as the Chairman of 'the National Committee for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Great October Revolution' The Committee decided to hold a public meeting in Delhi on the eve of the Revolution and was anxious that Mr Desai should be the Chief Guest Mr Desai had no hesitation in accepting my request 'How can I not accept', he said graciously, when the Soviet government and people have been so good to us and when they celebrated our anniversary of independence so enthusiastically?' Mr Desai also spoke with the utmost appreciation of his recent visit to the Soviet Union, the warm-hearted reception given to him and the very useful talks he had with Soviet leaders

The meeting in honour of the 60th anniversary was in some ways unique It was attended by the leaders of all Parties Among those who

spoke on the occasion were the Prime Minister himself, Mr Y B Chavan, the leader of the Opposition, Mr Madhu Limaye, general secretary of the Janata Party and the leaders of both Communist parties, CPI and CPM This showed that the Revolution of 1917 was not the monopoly of any one Party or country but a world event It also showed that Indo-Soviet friendship had stood, and would always stand, above all political vicissitudes

I have never come across an octogenarian or, for that matter, septuagenarian who was so sprightly in body and mind as Mr Desai He also showed that he possessed a quality, which had not been specially associated with him, resilience During the first two months of this year he had occasion to demonstrate this in his handling of such different personalities as President Carter, Prime Minister Callaghan, Mr Patrick Hillary, the Prime Minister of Ireland, the King of Nepal and the Shah-in-Shah of Iran It is strange that a man who is capable of showing such resilience in dealing with major problems and personalities should be so completely lacking in this quality in a comparatively simpler and far more controversial matter – prohibition

(Feature Unit, 1978)

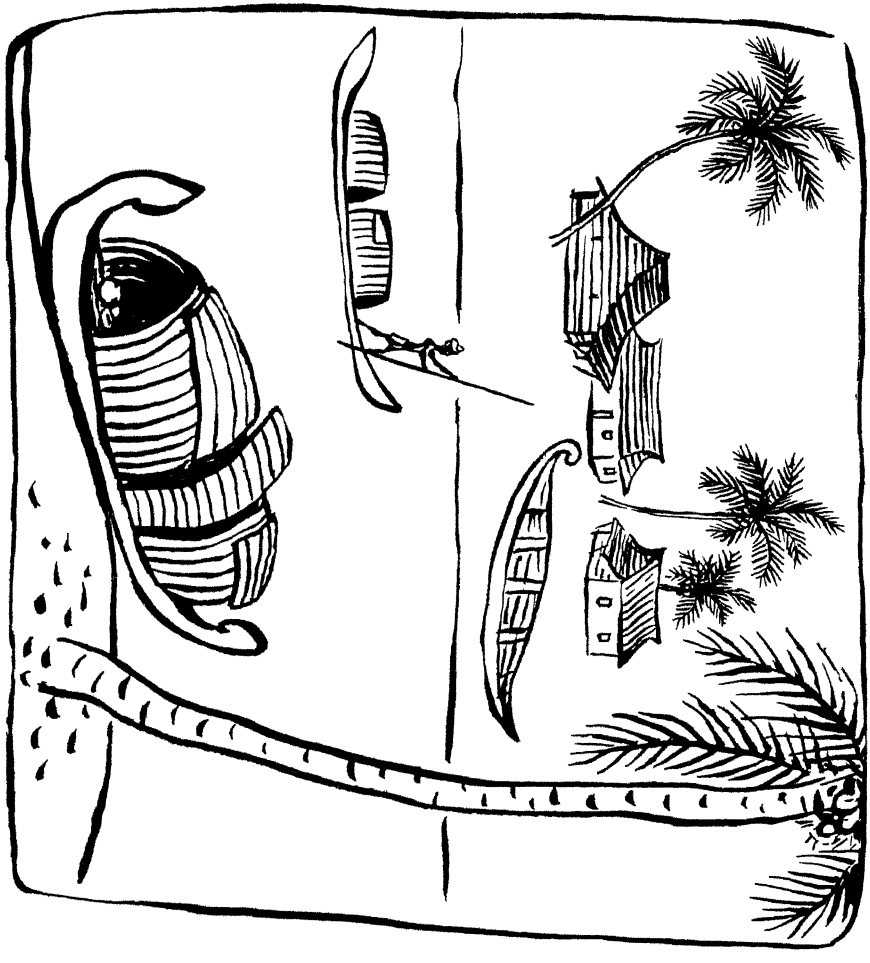
15. My Dreamland

Every man has a dreamland Some men must have a dream-girl too Both live in constant fear that the dream may clash with reality and be blown away Happy the man who feels that on the whole the reality has corresponded to his dream

My own dreamland has been Kerala It was also a physical reality for me in the first fifteen years of my life—my only reality, for I knew no other Kottayam in north Travancore, where I was born and brought up, was the centre of my universe

My only visit to Trivandrum, the capital of Travancore, was in 1906 when my father was nominated a member of the Sri Moolam Praja Sabha, a pale forerunner of representative government, which has since assumed weird forms in Kerala, and not in Kerala alone The journey of less than a hundred miles took three days in a *vallom* (country boat), rowed by hardy boatmen across the beautiful lakes, lagoons and canals of Travancore On the first night, we did sixteen miles to Alleppey, when I had my first glimpse of the sea On the second evening, in the treacherous Ashtamudi (eight-cornered) Lake a storm arose, turning the placid lake into a raging sea, and our boat was nearly washed away into the ocean We reached Trivandrum on the evening of the third day All the way we felt we were in the arms of nature, revelling in its various moods, sometimes smiling and benevolent, sometimes in convulsions How different from the plane journeys nowadays when one feels like a postal package carried from place to place! No wonder the Dalai Lama, when informed by Sir Basil Gould, our Political Officer in Sikkim, that Miss Amy Johnson had performed the first solo flight from England to Australia in record time, exclaimed: 'Why was the honourable lady in such a hurry?'

Our journeys northwards were more frequent In Ottapalam, in former British Malabar, lived my father's sister, and it would have been a serious dereliction of duty on my father's part if he had not paid her an annual visit In those days the matrilineal system was in full force among us, Nairs, and the sister counted more than the wife. In marrying a woman, a man was merely displaying, to use Bernard



Shaw's words, 'an insane desire to maintain somebody else's daughter' This did not relieve him of his sacred obligations to his sister and her children, who were his legal heirs The matrilineal system has since been given up, but the matriarchal airs of our women persist, not only in the domestic sphere but in public life No wonder that Kerala produced the first woman judge of the High Court, the first woman Surgeon-General, the first woman Chief Engineer and the first woman member of the Legislative Council

In other ways, too, Kerala women have made a name for themselves Ordinarily, our women as well as men wore nothing but a loin cloth As soon as we crossed the Western Ghats into Kerala, Macqueen, my Collector in Trichinopoly, who was accompanying me to attend my marriage, noticed the women's dress—or undress—and exclaimed 'The scenery is getting distinctly picturesque!' Nowadays, unless one peers closely, the human scenery does not strike you in the eye Nevertheless, even today the women of Kerala have no peers in the artless art of feminine sophistication

To Ottapalam, too, the first part of our journey was in a country boat Leaving Kottayam after dinner, we reached Vaikom, 24 miles away, in the morning We bathed in the temple tank and worshipped at the sacred shrine and, after a siesta in a friend's house or in a mango grove, we resumed our journey to Ernakulam in the cool of the evening We reached Ernakulam next morning—then a small town, now a beehive—and proceeded to Ottapalam by train in the afternoon Until the Shoranur-Ernakulam line was built at the beginning of the century, this part of the journey used to be by bullock-cart My mother used to tell me how nervously she sat in a bullock-cart on her way to Ottapalam as a bride to be scrutinised by her husband's sister, how nervous she was and how she dreaded the reception which she, as a 'foreigner' from Travancore and an intruder into a Malabar family, would get

I myself used to go in a bullock-cart to Palai where my eldest brother was practising as a lawyer To me the 22-mile journey was an exciting adventure One evening after dinner all of us got into our cart, in which a mat had been spread over the straw, and we lay side by side like sardines Parts of the road from Kottayam to Palai were said to be infested by robbers Therefore my father insisted that, apart from the cart-driver, one of us should always stay awake This was not difficult, as the ruts often jolted us out of sleep But despite the jolts and the fear of robbers I was sorry when the journey was over and we reached our destination by daybreak

Who would care to undertake such journeys today? Not even villagers Nowadays, we are all in a hurry But even for the man in a hurry Kerala offers many attractions What can be more delightful than a car journey from Kanyakumari to Cannanore along the sea coast? Kanyakumari, where the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal meet, is a beauty spot, hallowed by ancient legends about its temple Here, and here alone, Parvathi appears as a Virgin Goddess and not as the consort of Siva She is engaged to be married to Siva, the feast is ready and the guests have assembled, but the bridegroom is not to be seen Siva is late In a huff Parvathi scatters on the seashore the rice and other dishes prepared for the feast Hence, so they say, the multi-coloured character of the silky sands of Kanyakumari

Not far from Kanyakumari is Suchindram with another temple, a gem of South Indian architecture A slight detour takes you to Padmanabhapuram, the old capital of Travancore, where you see a palace, made of timber, in a perfect state of preservation, with a number of old paintings and a royal bedstead made of 64 different kinds of Kerala wood The present capital, Trivandrum, is an hour's drive from Padmanabhapuram and is as picturesque a town as any in India Near Trivandrum there is Kovalam, ideal for swimming and bathing and a magnet for tourists from all over the world Beyond Trivandrum you play hide and seek with the Arabian Sea and go closest to it at Neendakara, immortalised in Thakazi's best-seller regarding the fisherfolk of Kerala, 'Chemmeen' Then you come to Alleppey, 'the Venice of the East', criss-crossed by canals Another hour's drive, and you are in Ernakulam, and its twin-town, Cochin, a fine natural harbour You now turn inland and again emerge on the sea-shore at Calicut, where Vasco da Gama, assisted by a sailor from Kerala whom he picked up in Zanzibar, arrived in 1497 and thus inaugurated 'the Vasco da Gama era'—an era which lasted for four and a half centuries and was brought to an end by another Keralite, General Candeth, who, with the minimum show of force, pushed the Portuguese out of Goa in 1962 Proceeding northwards from Calicut, you pass Mahe, a former French settlement, still reminding you of its French history by such sign-boards as 'Ecole de filles' and 'Palais de justice', and you end your journey at Cannanore, where the seashore is as beautiful as in Kanyakumari

In my fifteenth year, I left Kerala for fifty years in accordance with a prediction in my horoscope The astrologer was and still is a part of everyday life in Kerala None gives his daughter in marriage or embarks on business or sets out on a journey without consulting an

astrologer The astrologer is an expert not merely in the science of the stars but in the psychology of man and often tries to reconcile both Kerala is a land of superstitions and yet the greatest rationalist the world has seen, Sri Sankaracharya, who blended metaphysics with rationalism and touched the hem of the garment of God and even proceeded beyond Him, was born in Kaladi, not far from Cochin Not far from Kaladi, too, is Malayattur, where St Thomas, the apostle of Christ, came in 52 A D and practised penance on top of one of the ranges of the Western Ghats, overlooking the Periyar river And some of the oldest Muslims and the oldest Jews in the world were settled in Kerala Kerala has practised peaceful coexistence from time immemorial

During my fifty years' exile, my visits to Kerala were few and far between. Occasionally, I would go with friends to the great snake-boat race on the river Pamba and see a hundred boats, beak-shaped, kite-tailed or curly-headed, each having a hundred men at the oar, plying the water to the rhythm of drums and cymbals and the excited shouts of the spectators Or I would accompany a delegation from the Soviet Union, including President Voroshilov, to the wild game sanctuary on the Periyar river, an area of nearly 700 acres, situated at a height of between 3000 and 7000 feet There, we would hire a boat and cruise over the lake and watch herds of elephants, bison, antelope, sambar and wild boar We would then return to Kottayam, having visited en route a few plantations of tea and rubber and enjoyed the hospitality, liquid as well as solid, for which the planters of Kottayam district, fortunately free from prohibition, are famous From Kottayam we would drive to Ottapalam after spending a few hours at Cheruthuruthy in the exhilarating company of Kerala's greatest poet, Vallathol, (now, alas, no more) and watching a Kathakali performance, a dance-drama for which there is no peer in sheer vigour Once, seeing Bheema killing Dushassana and, in his unabated wrath, tearing out his entrails and putting them as a garland round his neck, Khrushchev turned to me and exclaimed 'And yet your people call themselves non-violent!'

Now at last, in my seventies, I am permanently settled in Ottapalam, though I still have to lead a perpetually peripatetic existence. Anyhow, Kerala which has always been my dreamland, has again become my homeland Familiarity, however, does not breed contempt for this land. To me, it has still the glory and the freshness of a dream

(*Eve's Weekly*, 1974)

16 A Microcosm of Indian Culture

When, in 1921, I appeared for the Personality Test of the ICS examination, which in those days used to be conducted in London and not in India, my examiners, all British, knowing that I hailed from Kerala, greeted me with the words, 'So you come from the land where women rule' They riddled me with questions regarding the matrilineal system, its genesis, its working and its advantages and disadvantages I attributed its origin to the fact that the Nairs were a fighting race when the men were engaged in fighting, the women were in charge of the home A secondary cause was the prevalence of polyandry among the Nairs 'Ah', exclaimed one of the examiners, 'as anthropologists say, maternity is a fact, paternity is only a theory' 'Yes', I said, 'and not in Kerala alone'

I mention this as an example of the popular impressions which used to be prevalent about Kerala, and still are, to some extent The Malayalees, with their peculiar social system, their peculiar habits, their peculiar dress, which until recently consisted of no more than a loin cloth for women as well as for men, and their peculiar women with their free and easy ways were regarded as a freak among the peoples of India This impression was confirmed, when in 1957 Kerala had its first communist government, the first to have emerged not merely in India but in the world under a Parliamentary, as distinguished from People's, democracy All this has obscured the contribution which Kerala has made to the multi-coloured, but fully-integrated, culture of India

Of this culture, Kerala is a microcosm To all appearances, Kerala is a racial and religious medley The Namboodiris, the first intruders from outside, were originally of Aryan stock The Nairs and the Thiyas were Dravidian Between the Nairs and the Namboodiris, however, there has been extensive inter-mixture For centuries there had been a custom under which only the eldest member of a Namboodiri family married a Namboodiri girl All the others married Nair girls The Nairs used to think, though they no longer do, that it was an honour for their girls to be married to the aristocratic Namboodiris

For the Namboodiri this was highly convenient, because he could have the joys of married life without paying for them or having to maintain their children who, under the matrilineal system, belonged to and were looked after by their mothers' family The result is that today the Nairs have as much Aryan as Dravidian blood in them For instance, the late Sir C Sankaran Nair, the first and only Keralite who became president of the Congress as long ago as 1897, had strikingly Aryan features On the other hand, the other famous Sankaran—E M Sankaran Namboodiripad—who headed the first Communist Government in Kerala is unmistakably Dravidian in complexion and appearance

All the principal religions of India have their adherents in Kerala Here the minorities are more prominent than elsewhere In India, as a whole, the Hindus account for 83 5 per cent of the population, in Kerala, 63 88 per cent In India, only 10 69 per cent of the population are Muslims, in Kerala the percentage is 17 29 rising to 33 per cent in the Malabar region Christians in India come to only 2 44 per cent, in Kerala they form 21 22 percent rising to 27 22 percent in Travancore, 32 per cent in Cochin Yet, no matter if a Malayalee is of Aryan or Dravidian stock, a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Jew, he is easily distinguished, wherever he may be, as a Malayalee, even as a native of East Bengal, now Bangladesh, could be distinguished as a Bengalee even after a quarter of a century of Pakistani domination

This, however, is a comparison which Mrs Malaprop would have called 'odorous' Unlike the Bengalees, who never reconciled themselves to being Pakistanis, the Malayalees are Indians to the tip of their fingers That is because Sanskrit culture, which is the kernel of Indian culture, did not enter Kerala as a conquering hero, out to subjugate the indigenous culture It did not come, saying, 'I came, I saw, I conquered'. Rather Kerala could say of it, 'It came, I saw, I conquered'

Not only did Kerala assimilate Sanskrit culture, but it has made a substantial contribution to it In the 6th century A D one Bhaskara wrote an authoritative Sanskrit treatise on astronomy In the 16th century the theory and practice of law were elaborated in two treatises, *Vicharamala* and *Vyavaharamala*, and these remained as the recognised legal codes until they were displaced by the Indian Penal Code and the Evidence Act Kulasekhara, founder of the illustrious Chera Dynasty (825-1019 A D) even wrote a Mahakavya, an epic poem, called Mukundamala, pervaded by the spirit of Bhakti or devotion as in the following passage

Let me live on earth, or ascend to heaven or descend to hell It does not matter if death will find me so long as I am content in remembrance of your lotus feet which share the beauty of the autumn lotus Without the thought of your lotus feet, the recital of the Scripture becomes a cry in the wilderness, the daily austerities only a means to reduce one's corpulence

The most majestic contribution of Kerala to Indian culture was the philosophy of Sankara in the 8th century Here human thought transcended all limits in its ultimate quest for truth, 'renouncing all thought of the enjoyment of reward here or hereafter'. Hinduism was cleansed of all accretions such as ritualism, tantrism and excessive anthropomorphism Indeed Sankara's philosophy proceeded even beyond God, though in his humanism and in his recognition of the limitations of the human mind, he gave a place for God or Iswara in his system His life, like Jesus Christ's, covered 32 years only Within that period he travelled all over India and formed monastic centres in Puri in the east, Dwaraka in the west, Sringeri in the south, and in the north Badrinath, where the Poojari is still a Keralite No one has done more to integrate India than this great son of Kerala

Kerala has not only contributed to a synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian cultures but has tried to reconcile different sects of Hinduism. As history has shown, conflicts between sects, as, for instance, between Catholics and Protestants, can cause as much havoc as conflicts between religions Under the Chera dynasty, Saivaism and Vaishnavism flourished side by side King Kulasekhara, the founder of the dynasty, was a Vaishnavite, his successor, Rajasekhara, was a Saivite

The attitude towards Christianity and Islam, too, was one of benevolent tolerance and often active patronage Christianity entered Kerala in 52 A D , with St Thomas, the Apostle of Christ, who lies buried in St Thomas Mount, Madras, and flourished under the patronage of the local rajas on the West Coast Christians, while adhering to their religion, took an enlightened interest in Hindu thought and philosophy The fanatical Portuguese, however, looked askance at this tendency At the famous Udayamperoor Synod (1598) the Church passed a decree warning the faithful against the customs and manners of the 'Kafirs' and any contact with Hindu religious literature Fortunately, Portuguese rule in Kerala—and in India—proved to be a mere interregnum Thereafter the Christian community was free not only to benefit from, but to benefit, Indian culture

to which Christian scholars have made a substantial contribution As examples may be mentioned I C Chacko's monumental book on Panini's Grammar, the Index to Puranas compiled by V Mani, Mundasseri's Synthesis of Aristotle and Abhinava Gupta in poetics, and Katakkayam's Kavya in 21 cantos and 3700 stanzas, called The Triumph of Jesus

At the same time some genuinely religious Christians began to fret, as genuinely religious people in all religious are apt to do, at the shackles on the human spirit, manufactured by institutional religions This feeling has found a fine echo in Mary John's 'Prayer to Jagadambika'

From the shrines erected by men who deceive
us by peddling salvation
From the shrines guarded by established religion's
policemen, step out into the open, Goddess Mother!

The earliest Muslims are said to have come to India soon after the passing of the Prophet The spice trade for which Kerala had been famous from time immemorial and to which there is a reference in Herodotus in the 5th century B C was, after the fall of the Roman Empire, mainly in the hands of Arab traders Ibn Batuta, the Arab traveller who visited India in the middle of the 14th century, has written 'The Muslim merchants of this place [Calicut] are so wealthy that anyone of them can purchase the entire cargo of the vessels put in here and fit others like them '

Kerala Muslims played a redoubtable part in the hundred years war between India and Portugal The daring deeds of Kunjali Marikar, the Admiral of the Fleet in the Zamorin's State, are written in letters of gold Latterly Malayalam writers like Basheer and K T Mohammed have been enriching Malayalam literature. At the same time, Hindu poets like Vallathol, Ulloor and G. Sankara Kurup have used Muslim themes in their poetry with great effect

Kerala has always had an aptitude for synthesis. Take, for instance, music The greatest of Kerala's composers was Maharaja Swati Tirunal (1813-1847), comparable to Tyagaraja himself Of his 500 compositions 300 are extant in different languages, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi and Sanskrit His eclecticism was reflected in his court, to which came noted musicians as Sulaiman and Allauddin from Delhi

The Kerala genius for synthesis found superb expression in the

development of the Ayyappan legend Originally Ayyappan was a deity of the forest at Sabarimala, which overlooks the plains of Tamilnadu from which there were occasional incursions of criminal tribes like the Maravars into Kerala He was a great hunter who kept tigers instead of dogs as his pack When Buddhism entered Kerala, Ayyappan was worshipped as Buddha Subsequently, when there were rivalries between the Shaivaite and Vaishnavaite sects, Ayyappan tried to reconcile them Thus arose a charming, though fantastic, legend that Vishnu took the female form and captivated Siva and that Ayyappan was the offspring

With the persistent Chola invasions from Tamil Nadu, Ayyappan became a warrior leading armies against the intruders from the east He had to deal with intruders from the west as well, the Arab pirates infesting the Arabian Sea At a fierce encounter between their leader, Babar, who in Malayalam is called Vavar, and Ayyappan, both fought so magnificently that they developed mutual respect and admiration and formed a friendship which is perpetuated in the Shrine for Vavar adjoining Ayyappan's, and pilgrims to the temple of Ayyappan have also to worship at the Vavar Shrine In Sabarimala there are no distinctions of caste or class All devotees hail one another, saying 'Ayyappa Swami! Be Blessed!'

In the fight against caste Kerala was in the forefront There used to be no caste under the Chera dynasty Caste was one of the offshoots of the advent of Aryan culture In Kerala the caste system was elaborated to such an extent that, according to the census of 1931, there were 271 castes and 473 sub-castes in Kerala No wonder Vivekananda called Kerala 'a lunatic asylum!'

It was in Kerala that the crusade against caste gathered strength It expressed itself in the great Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924-25, as a result of which all approaches to temples, which had hitherto been closed to the untouchables, were thrown open, and the Guruvayur Satyagraha of 1931-32, led by Kelappan and K P Kesava Menon Ultimately, the campaign against caste culminated in the Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936, under which all temples in Travancore were thrown open to Hindus of all denominations Mahatma Gandhi called this 'the miracle of modern times'.

Kerala is now in the forefront of the struggle against inequality and injustice This has sometimes taken wayward forms in the political sphere but the form which it has assumed in art and literature is wholly commendable Realism, not escapism, is their keynote Behind the realism of the greatest writers and artists, however, lies a realisation of

the validity and power of such elemental virtues as love and compassion This sentiment is admirably expressed in a poem called The Outcaste Nun, by Kumaran Asan, whose centenary was recently celebrated all over Kerala and outside

Heed not the scriptures that violate the truth
Of man and his moral law nor the words of man
For the ignorant crowd, yesterday's error
Hardens into today's tradition, tomorrow's law.
It is in love that the world takes its birth,
Love nurses it to growth, his fulfilled bliss
Man finds in the bonds of love; life itself is love.
The moment of death is when compassion dies.

(*Cultural Forum*, 1974)

17. Two Indias and Two Trevelyans

It is always pleasant to read a book written by a friend Sir Humphrey, now Lord, Trevelyan has written a book called *The India We Left* He and I were colleagues in the ICS We had much the same kind of experiences Both of us were Madras civilians. Both of us spent but two years in the Madras Presidency and were then taken into the Foreign and Political Department, subsequently called the Indian Political Service, dealing with the Princely States and the Frontier Both of us saw service in the States, I, on the Frontier as well. Both worked in the Central Secretariat When independence came, Trevelyan was Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, and after independence I took over as Foreign Secretary And both of us have amused ourselves and, I hope, others by writing about our experiences

Even after Trevelyan joined the British Foreign Service our careers ran on somewhat parallel lines I was India's first Ambassador to China and Trevelyan was Britain's first Charge d'Affaires to the Communist regime in Peking I was posted as Indian Ambassador in Moscow in 1952 and Trevelyan was posted as British Ambassador in Moscow in 1962 It is tempting but not easy to comment on a book written by such a close colleague To praise him may seem flattery, to criticise him will be ungracious

Fortunately half the book is not about Humphrey Trevelyan, but another Trevelyan, his great grand uncle Sir Charles Trevelyan served India off and on between the years 1826 and 1865 He was a personality, and those were the days when personality could have free play He was a rugged individual with a spirit of independence, which he revelled in asserting, particularly against his superiors, in season and out of season

Charles Trevelyan was filled with a reforming zeal This zeal he brought to bear as much on his own countrymen as on the people over whom he ruled As a very junior officer, he valiantly exposed the misdeeds of his chief, the Commissioner of Delhi, one Sir Edward Colebrook who, ably assisted by his wife and son, spent his time mak-

ing money in dubious ways In two years he sent home Rs 200,000 more than his pay Trevelyan made himself thoroughly disliked, and was even boycotted, by the British community for having let down one of its prominent members But he heroically persisted in his righteous compaign until Colebrook was ignominiously dismissed from service

Charles Trevelyan himself was recalled to England, but in 1859 he came back to India as Governor of Madras In that capacity he championed the rights of Madras against Calcutta, of the Presidency against the Centre, of the South against the North Now, too, he had a *bete noire*, a more exalted one, James Wilson, the Finance Minister Trevelyan opposed Wilson's measures to raise money by such means as the introduction of income-tax and the levy of a tax on tobacco He argued, as Congress critics used to argue in British days and continued to argue until the Chinese invasion of India in 1962, that the proper way of balancing the budget was by reducing the exorbitant military expenditure Trevelyan was not the man to mince words He condemned the budget as having been framed in utter recklessness and ignorance of Indian conditions He went further and denounced the author of the budget as 'one who had neither religion nor gentlemanly bearing but only what he thought was wordly wisdom' This was more than the Home Government could tolerate, and Trevelyan was recalled to England for insubordination, though the House of Commons eulogised his courage and independence

A few years later, strangely enough, Charles Trevelyan found himself back in India, and that as Finance Minister in the shoes of the man he had so savagely attacked As Finance Minister, he opposed the Government's Forward Frontier policy He described as 'unjust wars' all such campaigns as those the British had lately undertaken against Afghanistan, Sind, Gwalior, Burma and China He argued that the Frontier tribes should be brought to see reason through conciliation and not coercion He did not, however, go so far as Mahatma Gandhi who, when asked how he would meet an invasion from the direction of Afghanistan, replied, 'by love'

Charles Trevelyan pressed for the increasing association of Indians in the machinery of administration and put forward various schemes for constitutional reform He had not only the gift of sympathy and perception but vision At that time, there were some Englishmen who argued that it would be a mistake to educate Indians, since they might make use of their education to get rid of the British To this Sir Charles gave an unanswerable reply If British interest and duty were

really opposed to each other, he said, every honest Englishman would know which to prefer 'We should look not to the duration of our power', he said, 'but to the satisfactory discharge of it' If eventually British power in India was satisfactorily discharged, infinitely more satisfactorily than French power in Indo-China and Dutch power in Indonesia, the credit goes to such farsighted men as Charles Trevelyan They were men who cherished the hope that after 'the precarious and temporary relation' between Britain and India as the ruler and the ruled came to an end, there would be 'a more durable and beneficial relation founded on mutual goodwill and trust' On the whole, history has vindicated their vision

Humphrey Trevelyan, who was in India a century later, from 1929 to 1947, was of a very different type He had nothing of the crusading zeal of his great grand uncle Indeed the days of crusading, or any other kind of, zeal were gone The Indian Political Service Manual had laid down, 'The best work which a Political Officer often does is what he leaves undone' Lennox (subsequently Sir Lennox) Russell, who drafted the Manual as Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, was my chief as Resident at Hyderabad, and I found that he was indeed true to his motto

In serving in the Princely States, Humphrey Trevelyan knew that he was trying 'merely to prop up a system which had outlived its time and could not survive' Trevelyan had the candour to admit that one way in which the Princes were sought to be propped up was by 'bread and circuses', or, their Anglo-Indian equivalent, whisky and tigers!

Humphrey Trevelyan also knew that the elaborate effort made by the British Government to establish an All-India Federation, consisting of three more or less equal parts, the Congress, the Princes and the Muslim League, each balancing and neutralising the other, was but 'a last effort to swim against the tide' Unlike some of his diehard colleagues, Trevelyan did not try to distinguish himself by obstructing the tide. Nor, it must be said, did he do much to help the tide forward to its goal, as his great grand uncle might have done He was content to do his duty with distinction and grace in that station of life to which Providence, a Public School education and old family tradition had called him On the whole the latter part of the book which contains his own experiences in India is suffused with the sunset glow of a waning Empire

Trevelyan's most enduring work in India was what he did under Jawaharlal Nehru after he formed the Interim Government in 1946 and before India became independent in 1947 He prepared the

ground for the establishment of the Indian Foreign Service, drafted rules for its training and recruitment, organised the Foreign Ministry and evolved a programme for the establishment of diplomatic relations with foreign countries For him to work with Nehru was 'a stimulating experience' 'Here was a man', says Trevelyan, 'who had spent his life fighting the British, who had only recently been released from prison and yet was completely without bitterness ' That was what Churchill himself felt on meeting Nehru after India attained independence Churchill had a habit of shedding tears when he was emotionally affected R A Butler had stated that after Churchill's meeting with Nehru he found him in tears 'We put that man in jail for years', said Churchill, 'and he bears us no malice I could not have been so magnanimous '

The book ends with the observation that 'perhaps neither India nor Pakistan has yet found its new identity' Pakistan is still searching for its identity because it was, as the *Manchester Guardian* put it, 'a political monstrosity', for the creation of which the British cannot escape their share of responsibility With the advent of Bangladesh, with which West Pakistan had nothing in common except religion, Pakistan has to some extent shed its monstrosity, and it may yet gain its identity, provided its rulers have the wisdom to win, and not the temerity to try to wrest, the allegiance of such virile sections of the population as the Pathans and the Baluchis

India stands on a different footing It has never lost its identity Even British rule could not efface it India has belied the prediction of even such otherwise percipient men as Sir Charles Trevelyan who anticipated that with the spread of English education, of which he, like his famous brother-in-law, Macaulay, was an ardent supporter, Hinduism would crumble and India would voluntarily embrace Christianity Two centuries of British rule form but a page in the palimpsest of Indian history Already, as Trevelyan says, 'the imprint of the British power is less strong', but he is justified in hoping that 'it will never be wholly obliterated'.

(*The Statesman*, 1975)

18. The Punjab in Revolt

I have been reading a most interesting book by Prof V N Datta, called *New Light on the Punjab Disturbances, 1919* It contains the hitherto unpublished Volumes VI and VII of the Report of the Committee, headed by Lord Hunter, which was appointed to inquire into the Punjab disturbances of 1919, culminating in the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh

The then Government of India refused to permit the publication of these volumes on the ground that the evidence was given *in camera* and, as such, was privileged The real reason, however, was that it feared that its publication would reopen old sores, that the authority of the Army might be undermined and that it would provoke the indictment of British policy during the past half a century

The two volumes, now published, reveal the working of the official mind the individual minds of officials as well as the collective mind of the government It must be admitted that Jallianwala Bagh was an exceptional event in Indian history It was not typical of British administration it was an aberration On the whole, British imperialism was less crude, less obtrusive and less oppressive than any other imperialism which has afflicted mankind How then did British officials, civil and military, behave in the brutal, not to say barbarous, manner in which they did in the summer of 1919? What accounts for the floggings, the forced salamings, the bombing of civilians from the air, the erection of gallows for public hanging, the refusal to hand over the bodies of the dead to their relations, the notorious crawling order and the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, where Gen Dyer continued to fire on an unarmed crowd until the ammunition was exhausted?

The explanation lies partly, but only partly, in the character of the principal protagonists, namely, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Governor of the Punjab, and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, let alone Gen Dyer, who was almost a pathological case Lord Chelmsford was a weak man, a man who had no mind of his own He reminds one of President Eisenhower of whom it used to be said that he was like a cushion which bore the mark of the last man who sat on it On the contrary,

Sir Michael O'Dwyer was a strong man, one of the strongest in the ICS He boasted that he had at his disposal a force stronger than Gandhi's soul-force, namely, fist-force He had the greatest contempt for politicians He compared them with 'grasshoppers under the fern who make the field ring with their importunate cries' On the whole, to quote Prof Datta's words, he acted as 'a red rag to the Punjab bull'

Lord Chelmsford was very different from his liberal predecessor, Lord Hardinge He was entirely under the thumb of the bureaucracy, strongly entrenched in the Viceroy's Council, and had no use for men of independent thinking He preferred stooges But the day of stooges was coming to an end As Mr Kitchin, the Commissioner of the Lahore Division, said in a despatch in April 1919 'The Khan Bahadurs and Rao Sahibs are dead and not fresh corpses at that'

One 'corpse', however, was paraded before the Hunter Committee, namely, the Hon Major Malik Umar Hayat Khan, KCIE, OBE, MVO Faithfully he echoed His Master's Voice 'India', he said, 'was not a nation but a conglomeration of nations' 'There is no unity but every nation wants to be top of every other' Most of the misfortunes of the Punjab, he said, 'were due to fact that people were reading THE TRIBUNE and not the Civil and Military Gazette' Quoting from the Koran, he said that 'Hindus and Muslims could never be friends because Hindus were idol-worshippers' The opposition to the draconian Rowlatt Act, which precipitated the Punjab disturbances, was, according to Sir Umar Hayat Khan, simply due to the fact that 'the Rowlatt Act was meant for conspirators Conspirators thought that they would now be caught and would not be able to go on playing the fool as they had been doing' And his prescription for dealing with a seditionist was simply 'to get hold of him and send him to jail or to the Andamans and hang him or shoot him, or get rid of him somehow' It would have been unsafe for Sir Umar Hayat Khan and embarrassing for the Government of India if his evidence had been published

Such men as Sir Michael O'Dwyer were experts at keeping law and order in normal times, but they were completely at sea when they were faced with a strange phenomenon like Mahatma Gandhi and a new-fangled doctrine like satyagraha He noticed the resemblance between Gandhi's satyagraha and Tolstoy's doctrine of non-violence and said that 'Tolstoy's doctrine led to Bolshevism in Russia and Gandhi's would lead to the same results in India as in Russia' Lord Hunter, the Chairman of the Committee, was more percipient. He interjected that

'not all Bolsheviks are followers of Tolstoy Some of the best intellectuals are in it'

At first, Lord Chelmsford's government was inclined to hope that satyagraha would die of its 'intrinsic inanity' When it did not, men of his ilk began to suspect its author's sanity When Mr Setalvad, a member of the Hunter Committee, pointed out to Mr J P Thompson that Gandhi, whom he had held responsible for the violent incidents that occurred in the Punjab, was a firm believer in non-violence, all he could say was that 'one really doubts whether the man is quite sane, judged by ordinary standards'

The conduct of the government during the crisis of 1919 cannot be explained away by individual idiosyncracies, though they certainly aggravated the situation The fact is that the government had worked itself into the belief that in the spring of 1919 it was sitting on the top of a volcano which was about to burst Already, as Mr Ibbetson, one of the ablest officers of the ICS who was Lieut -Governor of the Punjab, put it, when there were agrarian disturbances in 1907, which were remorselessly crushed, a 'nayi hawa' (fresh wind) was blowing in the Punjab According to Sir Michael O'Dwyer and other officials, this wind was now being fanned not only by that fanatic, Gandhi, but by sinister external agencies. Among them were the Bolsheviks, Pan Islamists, the Khilafat agitators, the Egyptian rebels and the Amir of Afghanistan Indeed, Sir Michael O'Dwyer asserted before the Committee that the disturbances in the Punjab were 'part and parcel of the doings of the Amir of Afghanistan' There had been stray attacks on railway lines and attempts to seduce Indian troops These reminded the British of similar occurrences before and during the Indian Mutiny, and they were apprehensive that they were in for another 1857'

Prof Datta has pointed out how little justification there was for this fear, for at that time, the various elements, internal and external, which had contributed to the troubles, were not in a position to combine or to coordinate their activities To counter them and treat them as components of a coming revolution was like adding three and three and making it thirteen

Justice Rankin, an outstanding member of the Hunter Committee, disposed of the theory of an international conspiracy by putting a few s .nple questions to Mr Thompson after he had deposed that Russia, Afghanistan and Egypt had a hand in fomenting the disturbances in the Punjab The questions and the answers are worth recalling

Q Mr Thompson, I would like you just to help me to focus some things about the causes of the disturbances

A Yes, Sir

Q As far as the Punjab Government can make out at present, I gather that it would be going beyond the evidence in their view to hold that the disturbances broke out in concert with any trouble in Afghanistan

A That is so

Q In the same way, from the present point of view, any question of Bolshevism as one of the traceable causes of the disturbances is at present beyond the fair effect of the evidence?

A Yes

Q And much the same applies to the question of the connection with any trouble in Egypt?

A That is so

Q These are matters which should be considered and the truth about them is not entirely known, but as far as one can tell at present the fair effect of the evidence is not to establish any such connection?

A That is so certainly But we had very much less certainty on that point at the time the disturbances were on than we have now

Yet, the Mutiny mentality was the basic reason for the inhuman and, one may add, un-British, behaviour of British officials, civil and military, during the disturbances and for their resort to what Churchill called in Parliament 'frightfulness' 'Frightfulness', said Churchill, 'is not a remedy recognised in the British pharmacopia' Thanks to the Hunter Committee's recommendations and Sir Sankaran Nair's firm stand in the Secretary of State's Council, the British government brought to book the officers who were responsible for the atrocities in the Punjab, though Indian opinion still thought that they were let off lightly

(*The Tribune*, 1977)

19. 'To Ride or Not to Ride'

Few lines have been quoted, misquoted or parodied more often than the opening line of Hamlet's famous soliloquy 'To be or not to be, that is the question'

I remember a discussion in the Book-taster's Club in Chungking in 1944 on the subject, 'To drink or not to drink' The conclusion was the same as the one reached by Confucius 2,500 years ago, namely, that one may drink but not beyond the point of mental confusion

There also comes to my mind a cartoon in the Soviet magazine, *Krokodil*, the Soviet equivalent of *Punch*, among the series called 'Shakespeare and the American way of life' In that cartoon Hamlet is depicted, moody and thoughtful, under the battlements of Elsinore, over which fly huge banners bearing the inscription 'Drink Coca Cola', and the caption is 'To drink or not to drink Coca Cola, that is the question'

For some time past a question which had been agitating the Central Secretariat was 'To ride or not to ride' Should riding continue to be compulsory for the IAS and the other superior services or should it be dispensed with?

For the ICS riding used to be compulsory Failure in the riding examination disqualified a candidate, however well he had done in other subjects and however high he might have stood in the successful list In 1902 an Indian candidate, Shadilal, came out of the examination with flying colours but he failed in riding and was disqualified In the same year, V P Rao took the examination and passed and was allotted to the judicial side of the ICS Before Rao was even confirmed as District and Sessions Judge, Shadilal became Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court!

The riding examination in the ICS was a test of one's skill in trotting, cantering, galloping and jumping over a fence, 3 feet 6 inches high The candidates in my year appeared for the test at the Cavalry School at Woolwich, London At the end of the test Capt Barry, the riding instructor, told us: 'Gentlemen, you have all passed, and when you return to India I advise you to get motor cycles'

After India attained Independence riding continued to be compulsory for the IAS There was, however, a growing feeling among politicians that riding was unnecessary and a little incongruous in the present set-up in India And this view received support from the Administrative Reforms Commission

One reason urged for the discontinuance of riding was that whereas in British days several villages were inaccessible except on foot or on horseback, this was no longer the case as there has been a vast improvement in communications and transport. This is true Yet there is a difference between an officer riding past the villages in a car or a jeep and staying there just long enough to do his business, and the old-time officer who would go there riding, talk to the villagers and get to know them and their problems and grievances and possibly spend the night under a tent in a mango grove

This established a bond between the officers and the villagers, of which the best officers in British days used to be proud Couchman, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, told me at my first meeting with him, 'If I had my way, I would prohibit every ICS officer from owning a car or a wife in the first ten years of his service.' I must confess that within my first year I had both I have not regretted either but, in addition, I had a horse

The horse was specially useful in Baluchistan where I was in charge of a turbulent agency known as the Zhob, sandwiched between Afghanistan and Waziristan When the Sardars and Maliks of the Zhob heard that for the first time an Indian, and that too a Hindu and a 'down-country Hindu', had been posted as Political Agent, they went in a deputation to the Chief Commissioner of Baluchistan protesting against my appointment However, when they found that I could ride a horse and speak Pushtu as well as any British Sahib, they were mollified, and they were even more impressed when they found that my teenaged daughters could ride as well.

We had the horses of the Zhob militia at our disposal, and every afternoon we would ride around the lovely countryside of Fort Sandeman That was a good preparation for me, for the only thing which I have done in my life in the nature of a feat was a 125-day overland journey from India to China on horseback, along the most formidable mountain trail in the world and across the Himalayas, the Karakorams and the Pamirs, described in my book *Delhi-Chungking.* I would indeed be sorry if my successors in the IAS were to be denied the training and the opportunity for such joyous adventures.

A strange reason which has been advanced against riding for the

IAS is that it is incompatible with the atmosphere of a socialistic pattern of society' A more plausible argument is that riding involves expenditure beyond its utility I understand that after considerable noting in various departments, a decision was on the point of being taken dispensing with the riding test for the IAS, when Mrs Indira Gandhi stepped in

Mrs Gandhi's father was a keen horseman I recall Jawaharlal Nehru riding on the Mall on a white horse in 1937 On horseback he looked more imperial than the Viceroy, the Governor of the Punjab and the Commander-in-Chief in their favoured cars – favoured, for in those days they were the only personages who were allowed to use cars in Simla

Mrs Gandhi admitted that there was some force in the arguments urged against the riding test She observed, however, that apart from the question of its usefulness, riding had a psychological value It instilled a feeling of self-confidence and fearlessness – qualities essential in men holding positions of responsibility A man who could control a horse, said Mrs Gandhi, would also know how to control a mob

Members of the IAS should consider themselves primarily as servants of the people, but they should know not only to serve but to command Not that they should follow the motto of Oliver Cromwell 'Not what the people want, but what's good for them ' What's good for the people should still be the motto of a district officer Only, in this democratic age, he should try to make the people realise that what is being done is good for them

I am very happy that, thanks to Mrs Gandhi's intervention, the deplorable proposal to discontinue riding for the IAS has been dropped

(*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 1973)

20. The Princes and the Paramount Power

The Princes are, for all practical purposes, an extinct tribe The Paramount Power, namely the British Crown, too, has gone with the wind Nevertheless, the Princes' scramble for power and status and their demand for equality with the Paramount Power and for independence vis-a-vis the Government of India are of historical interest Nor is this matter lacking altogether in topical interest

I have been reading a very interesting book called *The Origin, Rise and Consolidation of the Indian States A British Assessment, 1929* It is a reprint of a note which was prepared in 1929 under the direction of the Government of India for private circulation only Admirably written, the note is typical of the thoroughness and meticulous attention to detail which characterised the ICS

The note is also a masterpiece in the art of condensation Some three hundred years of tangled history, showing, side by side, the rise of the British power in India and of the Princely States, numbering 560 and ranging from Hyderabad, which had as great an area as France and a population of 14 million, to Sachin, which had an area of less than 50 square miles and a population of less than 20,000, has been compressed into an eminently readable note The one patent error in the book occurs in the Publisher's Note which says that the Chamber of Princes was inaugurated during the Viceroyalty of Lord Minto in 1921 Actually Lord Minto was Viceroy of India from 1905 to 1910.

The note purports to be an objective study Yet it was written with a purpose The purpose was to burst the bubble of the Princes' claim to sovereignty and equality with the British Crown and to rebut their complaint that the government had been interfering unduly in their internal affairs in contravention of their Treaty rights As a result of such persistent complaints, a Committee, known as the Butler Committee, was appointed to examine the relationship between the Princes and the Paramount Power The note in question was prepared for the edification of the members of the Committee

Based on an impressive historical survey of the past three centuries,

the conclusion is drawn that no Indian State, old or new, ever had any external sovereignty, that such internal sovereignty as was enjoyed by the States they owed to the Crown, and that they had no inherent rights, or rights accruing from Treaties, which in any way placed them on a footing of equality with the Crown Except for a handful of ancient Rajput States, which preserved 'some measure of internal sovereignty', all States were 'the creation of the East India Company' and 'the bi-product of the rise of that Company'

Though the book does not mention this incident, the claim of the Princes to equality with the Crown reached its height when the Nizam threatened to take his dispute with the British over the Berars to the League of Nations In 1925, the Nizam was told pointblank that whatever the Treaties might say, practice and usage had made the British Crown the Paramount Power in India and that, as a corollary, it had the right to interfere in the internal affairs of any State, when it thought fit to do so The Nizam was even told that the fact that he enjoyed the title of His Exalted Highness did not put him in a category different from the other Princes And the Butler Committee, as a result of its deliberations, came to the conclusion that 'Paramountcy is Paramount'

Yet the claim to equality continued to be heard until, and even after, independence One has only to remember how Dewan of Travancore, Sir C P Ramaswami Iyer, declared Travancore independent on the eve of India's independence, and even took steps to establish diplomatic relations between Travancore and Pakistan

The British government, while stamping on the pretensions of the Princes to equality, encouraged them to assert their claim to independence vis-a-vis the incipient government of free India The Princes were assured that their engagements were with the Crown alone and that they could not be transferred to any new corporation without their consent It was this bloated idea of their status that tempted some of them to adopt a recalcitrant attitude towards the Government of India in the early days of independence

The British government had also encouraged the Princes to claim an equal voice with the rest of India in framing the Constitution of new India The British thought that this claim was justified not merely on account of the area of the Princely States which, by a little manipulation (e g , by including the Berars in the area of the States) was reckoned at 50 per cent of the total area of India and the population, which was shown to be 25 per cent, but also and primarily on the 'political value' of the Princes The political value is subtly

defined as 'the steadying influence the Princes can exert in the change from theocratic customs and sectional patriotisms to a national consciousness and democratic ideals' And it was in order to enable them exert their 'steadying influence' that the British made strenuous efforts to set up an All-India Federation, consisting, in equal parts, of the Congress, the Muslim League and the Princes—an arrangement under which the three parties would have counterbalanced and neutralised one another

The note has indulged in certain generalisations which reveal the strange reading of Indian history and Indian character by British officials It says that 'it has been the fate of India, from before the dawn of history, to suffer invasion after invasion of the more virile races from above the passes' Unfortunately for the invaders, the note would have it, they allowed themselves to be 'Indianized and devitalized' by a slow process of absorption What Indian historians have regarded as India's genius for synthesis, which reached its height in the period and in the person of Akbar the Great, was regarded by British officialdom as India's capacity to soften and to corrupt the character of the virile races 'The Muslims failed', says the note, 'because they became in fact Indianized ' Yet, in another part of the note, the decline of the Moghul Empire is rightly attributed to Aurangzeb's intolerance, i e , his refusal to become Indianised

The Muslims failed, says the note, because they ceased to draw fresh blood from their homelands As for the Marathas, 'they had no fresh blood on which to draw' There was no such danger in the case of the British, because they continued to draw fresh blood from 'British families trained by generations of public service, and to renew their fighting forces by drawing on the incomparable British Army whose leaders had been trained by generations of Continental wars' Yet, within two decades after the note was written, the British Empire in India went the way of all other Empires The stubborn refusal of the British to be 'Indianized' in any way for fear that they might be 'devitalized' did not save them from their fate

(*The Indian Express*, 1977)

21 Indians in 'The Secret Department'

Full half of my service was spent in the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India I was the first Indian to have been admitted to it The evolution of this department and my experiences in it may be of some general interest

In the time of Robert Clive and his successors the relations of the East India Company with the 'native' rulers were conducted through a department called the Secret Department The department was reorganised by Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, and christened 'The Political Department' Subsequently, with the addition of the North-West Frontier, Baluchistan and the Sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf, which were administered from India, the department came to be called the Foreign and Political Department It consisted of ICS men, who were generally recruited to this department between the third and the fifth year of their service as well as from the army officers The importance of the department can be seen by the fact that throughout its existence it remained under the control of the Viceroy and not of a Member of the Viceroy's Council

Though the name, 'The Secret Department', was abandoned, considerable secrecy continued to be attached to the dealings between the British Residents or Political Agents and the Indian Princes It was the nearest thing to a diplomatic service in British India, and secrecy is the essence of diplomacy Like the diplomatic service, too, it was often regarded, somewhat enviously, as the gentlemen's department, a department consisting of gentlemen of leisure Sir Lennox Russell, who was my first Resident at Hyderabad, compiled, when he was Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, the Indian Political Department Manual, in which he said, 'The best work which a Political Officer often does is what he leaves undone' a motto to which he adhered as Resident at Hyderabad Once Lord Wavell accosted a member of the Political Department with the words 'So, you belong to a Service which consists of soldiers who do not want to fight and civilians who do not want to work'

Lord Curzon, on the contrary, went into superlatives over the

officers of the Political Department He said in one of his farewell speeches in 1909

"A good 'Political' is a type of officer difficult to train, indeed, training by itself would never produce him, for there are required in addition qualities of tact and flexibility, of moral fibre and gentlemanly bearing, which are an instinct rather than an acquisition The public at large hardly realises what the 'Political' may be called to do At one time he may be grinding in the Foreign Office, at another he may be required to stiffen the administration of a backward Native State, at a third he may be presiding over a jirga of unruly tribes on the frontier, at a fourth he may be demarcating a boundary amid the wilds of Tibet or the sands of Seistan There is no more varied or responsible Service in the world than that of the Political Department of the Government of India And right well have I been served in it, from the mature and experienced officer who handles a Native chief with velvet gloves, to a young military 'Political' who packs up his trunk at a moment's notice and goes off to Arabia or Kurdistan I commend the Political Department of the Government of India to all who like to know the splendid and varied work of which Englishmen are capable "

It is not by accident that Lord Curzon used the word Englishman It was the most English of all services in India, and continued to remain more English than any other service until the bitter end Occasionally, a feeble voice was heard for the partial Indianisation of the Political Department, but it fell on deaf ears Even a liberal Viceroy like Lord Ripon and a progressive Secretary of State like Edwin Montagu were unable to make a dent in this attitude The Political Department was regarded as too sacrosanct to come under the purview of the Islington Commission which was appointed in 1912 to report on the public services in India, including the problem of their Indianisation It was with the utmost difficulty that Roos Kappel, an almost legendary Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province during the First World War, persuaded the Government of India to agree to the appointment of Sahibzada Abdul Quayum, a member of the Provincial Service, as Political Agent, Khyber, for a couple of years, and that too at the tail end of his service Roos Kappel had the highest opinion of Abdul Quayum He reported that 'the fact that the Khyber escaped the frontier troubles of 1915 was more due to Abdul Quayum than any other individual, including myself'

The issue of the Indianisation of the Political Department, however, could not be shelved for ever In 1924 the Lee Commission on the Superior Civil Services of India recommended that 25 per cent of the Indian Political Service should be Indianised It was under this scheme that I was taken into the Foreign and Political Department in 1925, in the third year of my service The recommendation of the Lee Commission, however, was honoured more in the breach than in its observance, for in 1939, out of a total of 172 officers in the Political Department, only 12 or 7 5 per cent instead of 25 per cent were Indians Out of them only two or three were from the ICS and eight or nine were Muslims

What is the explanation for the stubborn resistance to the Indianisation of the Political Service? In my autobiography, *Many Worlds*, I have explained it thus

'In the first part of this century, the ICS was predominantly manned by Englishmen, and the Foreign and Political Department which dealt with the Frontier and the Princely States was practically reserved for them The reason for the exclusion of Indians was that the Princes would not like their own countrymen to be Residents or representatives of the Paramount Power, and that an Indian, and especially a Hindu, would not be able to command the respect and obedience of the unruly Muslim tribes on the Frontier'

My own experience showed that both these theories were incorrect It is true that some of the Princes played up to the British by professing that they would not like to have an Indian as representative of the Paramount Power Yet when one was appointed, the Princes went out of their way to show their consideration for him I can never forget how, when I was Political Agent, Western Rajputana States, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, at my first meeting with him, came down the stairs to receive me, instead of receiving me at the top of the stairs, which was all that protocol demanded Again, it was a ticklish business for me as Dewan of Bharatpur to assert my authority vis-a-vis the Maharaja of Bharatpur who, like the Maharaja of Alwar next door, had, in view of the previous history of the two States, been obliged to give an undertaking that he would issue no order without consulting the Dewan and if there was any difference of opinion between him and the Dewan the matter would be referred to the Viceroy In other words, the Dewan was all in all The Maharaja of Bharatpur was a charming but temperamental person, and I had to

exercise my special powers without treading on his sensitive toes Sir Bertrand Glancy, the head of the Political Department, once observed that 'whereas Harvey [the Chief Minister of Alwar] was to the Maharaja of Alwar, like a red rag to the bull, the Maharaja of Bharatpur would eat out of Menon's hands' I may add that to the Maharaja of Bharatpur, too, my immediate predecessor, Sir Richard Tottenham, was a red rag

On the Frontier, too, the appointment of an Indian as Political Agent was a novelty From 1937 to 1939 I held the post of Political Agent, Zhob, a turbulent agency in Baluchistan, sandwiched between Afghanistan and Waziristan, where a predecessor of mine Col Finnis and my immediate successor, Major Barnes, were shot dead When I was posted to this Agency, the Sardars and Maliks went in a deputation to the Agent of the Governor-General and protested against the appointment of an Indian and that a Hindu and a 'down-country Hindu' Yet, when I left the Zhob, these very men went up to Sir Arthur Parsons, and implored him to let me stay on Sir Arthur, who was no prodigal in words, wrote to me 'you have left the Zhob a better place than you found it'

If, then, the susceptibilities of the Princes and the tribes were not an adequate reason for the exclusion of Indians, what was the real explanation? Was it racialism? Not in the ordinary sense of the word I served for more than two decades in an almost exclusively English department Not once was I subjected to any kind of racial discrimination or arrogance On the contrary I received the utmost courtesy and assistance from my colleagues and superiors in the department It almost seemed as if they were keen that, as the first Indian to be taken into their midst, I should make good Even the fact that I was married and had six children in quick succession did not count against me in a Service in which marriage was normally a disqualification for admission

With some of my old colleagues I am still in correspondence Among them are Sir Olaf Caroe, who was Foreign Secretary to the Government of India and Governor of NWFP, and Sir Herbert Thompson, who was Political Agent in Bharatpur when I was Chief Minister Unlike the relations between him and Sir Richard Tottenham, which were distinctly strained, Thompson and I were the best of friends and continue to be so To Caroe I owe a special debt it was he who encouraged me, when I was India's representative in China, to undertake an overland journey, mostly on foot and on horseback, from India to China It was this journey that stirred

whatever potentialities I had in me as a writer and prompted me to write my first book, *Delhi-Chungking*

Another Briton with whom I have been in correspondence is Lady Barton, the gracious 85-year-old wife of Sir William Barton, my Resident at Hyderabad 50 years ago He was a dynamic person so different from his lethargic predecessor, Sir Lennox Russell Laterly the correspondence between her, Sir Olaf Caroe and myself have taken a pseudo-philosophical turn, appropriate to our age, as a result of my New Year news-letter to some friends, in which I had indulged in some stray reflections on life and death

The question why there was so much resistance to the Indianisation of the Indian Political Department remains to be answered In one word, it was the guardianship complex of the British rulers They felt that, like Plato's guardians, they were a class apart dedicated, according to their lights, to the public weal and trained and destined to rule 'the lesser breeds without the law'

Under the impact of public opinion, especially after the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, the guardianship complex gave way to a kind of trusteeship complex, at any rate in the minds of the more enlightened officers serving in British India The Princely States were the last to be affected, or allowed to be affected, by the current of freedom The Princes were encouraged to think that their relations remained not with the Government of India, but with the Crown indeed, in his relations with the Princes the Viceroy was known as the Crown Representative Until the last minute, the hope was entertained that the Princes might survive and, together with them, their British protectors

It was an idle hope The current of freedom, which was running throughout India and would soon run over the whole of Asia and Africa, would not spare the Princes or their guardians either Indeed, compared to the fate which overcame Kings and Emperors in the twentieth century, the Princes in India must thank their stars for having been let off so lightly

(*Indo-British Review*, 1977)

22 The Armed Forces and I

Patrick Gilmore, an American press correspondent in Moscow during the Second World War, married a Russian ballerina and wrote a book with the egotistic, but ungrammatical, title, *Me and My Russian Wife* S K Chettur, a member of the ICS, wrote a book with a slightly less egotistic title—for he at least relegated the first person to the second place—called *The Steel Frame and I* Following their examples, I shall call this article 'The Armed Forces and I'

My first encounter with the Armed Forces turned out to be abortive and rather unpleasant In 1923 I was posted as Assistant Collector in Trichinopoly, now Tiruchirappally, my first station in the ICS Percy Macqueen, my Collector, and his wife were overwhelmingly friendly As advised by them, I called on the Army officers in the Trichinopoly Cantonment They were all British None of them returned my call And when, a few months later, my wife joined me as a bride, it was for them, according to custom, to have called on the newly-married couple None of them did

In 1925 I was posted to Hyderabad There the attitude of the officers towards me was very different I now belonged to the charmed circle of the Residency I was Under Secretary to the Resident and also District Magistrate of Secunderabad and the British Administered Areas The State of Hyderabad was the last rampart of feudalism in India, and the fabulously rich Nawabs of the Residency The British army officers thought that it was worth their while to be on friendly terms with us We were not on slap-back terms with them, but our relations were cordial

In Peshawar, my next station, the Armed Forces were even more prominent than in Hyderabad There was the 'Peshawar Club' which was exclusively British Indian members of the All India Services were treated as an exception Sir Norman Bolton, the Chief Commissioner, advised me to become a member of the Club I found that an Indian could only be an Honorary Member, even though he had to pay the subscription, and that he would not be allowed to vote at the Committee meetings, etc So I refused to become a member A few

years later an Indianised Cavalry regiment was posted to Peshawar, and Brig Sankaran Nair, who was in charge of the regiment, refused to let the horses take part in the races, unless Indians were admitted to the Club Then the discrimination against Indians was removed

My relations with the Army were closest in Baluchistan I was Political Agent, Zhob, a turbulent area, sandwiched between Afghanistan and Waziristan, with Fort Sandeman as my headquarters Fort Sandeman was primarily an army station There were three regiments there, the Rajputs, the Baluchis and the Gurkhas The Rajputs were commanded by Col Passy, the Baluchis by Col Guiton, and the Gurkhas by Col Tuker Col Tuker had made a name for himself in the Second World War in the famous Fourth Indian Division in Egypt It was he who had walked into Von Arnim's tent and taken him prisoner

In Fort Sandeman there was an 'English Club', and I was its President by virtue of my office My wife and I spent most of our evenings at the Club, which had an excellent tennis court, a squash court and a bar My wife was the only teetotaller there Whenever we entered the Club, the other members would shout to the waiter 'Bring a strong glass of Scotch for Mr Menon and a strong glass of water for Mrs Menon'

As Political Agent, I took precedence not only over the Officer Commanding in Fort Sandeman but over the Area Commander in Loralai He was one Brig Ross, an uncouth individual, so fat that it used to be said about him that when he swam in the Loralai river, his stomach touched the bottom of the river but when he stood up he found himself out of his depths! Once I received a telegram from him saying, 'Area Commander arriving Fort Sandeman Meet at Inspection Bungalow at 11 30' I thought that this was a brusque, not to say a rude, message So I wired back 'Political Agent will be glad to meet Area Commander at 12 30 at the Castle' (The Castle was the name of our house situated on the top of the highest hillock in Fort Sandeman) The Area Commander regarded my telegram as an affront and refused to permit the Army to take part in the annual sports Throughout this row, the sympathies of all the British officers in Fort Sandeman were with me I mentioned this incident to Sir Arthur Parsons, the Chief Commissioner of Baluchistan, and his comment was, 'Well done That is how I treat the Accountant General'

I have been fortunate enough to meet some renowned soldiers who distinguished themselves in the War One of them was Lord Wavell,

the Viceroy He was a somewhat taciturn individual but impressed me as a man of strength and integrity, especially after his flabby predecessor, Lord Linlithgow At that time, I was the Indian Representative in China Sedulously he used to read my fortnightly 'private and personal' letters to Sir Olaf Caroe, the Foreign Secretary, and make piquant comments thereon After India attained independence, the fortnightly letters were written to Jawaharlal Nehru and have now been published as a book, *Twilight in China*

In 1945, I attended the San Francisco Conference, where the United Nations was formed, as a member of the Indian delegation After the Conference was over, we visited a Red Indian Settlement at Glacier Park where Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, the Leader of our Delegation, was honoured by the Red Indian tribe by being adopted as a member of their tribe Thereupon, in a jovial mood I sent a telegram to Sir Olaf Caroe saying, 'Mudaliar made member of Black Feet Clan of Red Indian tribe Ceremony of at least symbolic circumcision will take place tomorrow' Lord Wavell saw the telegram and noted on it 'This will make a good cartoon for Shankar!'

Lord Wavell's handling of the Bengal famine was very different from that of his predecessor, Lord Linlithgow, who merely looked on when people were dying Wavell had also a flair for poetry as shown by his book, *Other Men's Flowers* However, his secret despatches to the British government, recently published in London, showed that he had his limitations Unlike his brilliant successor, Lord Mountbatten, who had greater imagination and flexibility, Wavell could not appreciate the calibre or character of Indian leaders and merely viewed the situation in India from the point of view of law and order

My contacts with Wavell's successor, Lord Mountbatten, were meagre During his Viceroyalty, I was mostly in Chungking, the War-time capital of China He, too, had a sense of humour He visited Chungking during the War and spent a week-end with President and Madame Chiang Kai-shek in their mountain-home On the last day of his stay he sent a telegram to Prime Minister Churchill, saying 'Madame Chiang says I am her friend for life We leave for London tonight'

Lord Mountbatten was very scrupulous about his personal appearance Once, as Supreme Head of the South-East Asia Command, he visited an out-of-the-way place on the Burma-China frontier which was under the command of the American General, Stilwell He was a total contrast to Mountbatten He was a rough and ready soldier with a sharp tongue On Mountbatten's arrival by plane,

spick and span, Stilwell took him in a jeep over the roughest of roads and put him back in the plane in the late evening When the plane was about to take off, Stilwell turned to the other officers at the airfield and said 'Anyhow we have made him dusty' Mountbatten had a streak of vanity in him and that was what Stilwell was referring to Perhaps this streak was responsible for the obviously exaggerated and egocentric version which he has given to the authors of *Freedom at Midnight* regarding his part at the height of the partition of India, when, he says, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel went to him begging him to take over the reins of the Government of India and run it

China bristled with Generals It had produced a special breed called war-lords China had suffered from this pest for over a thousand years Chiang Kai-shek succeeded in eliminating them Some of them, however, were still dormant and rumbling I met Gen Lung Yun 'the Dragon', who was still lord and master of Yunnan, the frontier province between China, India and Burma Another former war-lord whom I met was Tang Hsi-ho, the former war-lord of the Szechuan Province in Chengtu Once, according to Chinese custom, his aged wife selected a 'shiao tai-tai', a young wife, for him She was, however, so little to his liking that on the same day he went off in a huff and married two ravishing women and brought them home Among all the Chinese war-lords, the most picturesque was Feng Yu-hsiang, 'the Christian General', an ardent convert to Christianity, who once baptised a whole regiment by turning the fire-hose on it saying 'Soldiers! You are now Christians'

Chiang Kai-shek fought the war-lords to a standstill and reduced them to impotence and gave China a unity which it had not had since the tenth century He, however, had no conception of the socio-economic needs of the country and especially of the peasants, and did little to meet them That was the main reason why he could not face the Communist onslaught and had to flee from the mainland of China to Formosa

In Russia, I was friendly with a number of Generals, whose names had become almost household words after the Second World War, such as Malinovsky, Chuikov, Timoshenko, Budenny, the famous Cossack General, and Voroshilov who became President of the USSR I met Marshal Stalin* himself, in fact I was the last diplomat to have met him only a fortnight before he died

Among the Russian Generals I met, none was more impressive than

*For an account of my interview with him, see Part I, Chapter 5

Gen Zhukhov He was four times Hero of the Soviet Union He defended Moscow, quoting the words of Alexander Nevsky, the legendary general who defended Russia against the Poles and Tartars in the thirteenth century, saying 'He who taketh up the sword shall perish by the sword Such has been the law of the Russian land and such it always shall be' I saw these words inscribed on a gun in Odessa which the Russians had captured from the British during the Crimean War

At the end of the War, Stalin was rather jealous of Marshal Zhukhov and sent him off on a minor command to the Crimea On Stalin's death, he was called back as a member of the Presidium and was Defence Minister for a number of years Later he was suspected of the cult of personality and dropped from the Presidium This, however, has not affected his reputation or his standing in the Soviet Union

I have also met a few American Generals One was Gen Hurley who came as the American Ambassador to China towards the end of the Second World War He was a handsome self-confident individual, who thought he could bring about a truce between the Kuomintang and the Communists and gaily went to and fro between Chungking and Yenan, the Communist hideout His efforts, however, came to nothing

A man of much greater calibre was Gen Marshal who came to Chungking as the Personal Representative of President Truman with the rank of Ambassador He did bring about a truce between the Communists and the Kuomintang but it did not last long However, he left the impression of a man of great ability and unfathomable good will

The most vainglorious soldier I have met was Gen MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Japan, after its defeat A hero of the Second World War, MacArthur conducted himself as if Japan belonged to him, and the canny Japanese played up to him and almost implored him to stay on as Shogun I had lunch with him in 1947 when I was Chairman of the UN Commission in Korea He treated me to the longest and most grandiloquent monologue to which I have ever listened He told me that the American occupation in Japan was essentially an attempt to apply the principles of the Sermon on the Mount to practical politics Once, when asked who were his mentors, he replied, 'George Washington and Jesus Christ' As Commander of the UN Forces in Korea in 1950, he overreached himself Without authorisation from the UN he crossed the 38th

Parallel into North Korea and carried his troops right up to the Yalu river, separating China from Korea, thus provoking the Chinese to enter the war in full force and inflicting enormous casualties on the American troops Soon MacArthur was ignominiously recalled to the USA by President Truman

It is sad to think of the fate which has overtaken some of the Generals who had once wielded enormous power and enjoyed enormous prestige Gen Chiang Kai-shek, whom the USA had exalted into a bastion of the free world, had to spend the last quarter century of his life as a lordly exile in Taiwan Gen MacArthur, who was all in all in Japan, ended up as Director of Remington Typewriters Hardly had Marshal Stalin's body become cold when the process, picturesquely but inaccurately called 'de-Stalinisation', set in

'Vanity of Vanities', sayth the preacher, 'all is vanity' Yet the men mentioned in this article were very different from the men whom they helped to defeat Hitler and Mussolini were, in historical retrospect, just 'poor players who strutted and fretted their hour upon the stage and are heard no more', and their exploits have become 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing' On the contrary, the Allied Generals, to whom I have referred in this article, have left their mark on history, hastened its march and wittingly or unwittingly helped the world, and especially Asia and Africa, to pass from 'the Vasco da Gama era' into an era of freedom, even though some of their countrymen are struggling hard to prevent the advent of that 'new international economic order', without which mere political independence is a mockery and a sham

(*Sainik Samachar*, 1977)

23. My Colleagues Who Are No More

Fifty years ago, when I appeared for the ICS examination in London, the first question in the English paper was What are the qualities which make the poem 'Oft in the Stilly Night', a work of art? The poem begins with the lines,

Oft in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain was bound me
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me

It ends with the same four lines, with one change 'fond memory' becomes 'sad memory' I now realise how appropriate is the change, for the memories which come to me in the evening of my life are at once sad and fond

Along the avenue of these memories there walks a procession of spirits who were once creatures of flesh and blood and were at work and play with me in different parts of India and abroad In this article I shall recall some of them with respect and affection At the same time, it will show how true it is that in the midst of life there is death, and the protean forms death can take

In 1921, eight of us, four Indians and four Englishmen, were posted to the ICS in the Madras Presidency Death has been impartial, for it has taken two from each category One of them was A S P Ayyar, whom I had known ever since we were together in the Madras Christian College He retired as judge of the High Court. He not only applied the law, but interpreted it and expounded the philosophy behind it, sometimes to the disapproval of his conservative colleagues He was a prolific writer His first book was *I go West* There he showed that he had a capacity for laughing at himself. On his first voyage to England, he was proceeding towards the men's W C. in a woman's dressing gown — he had never worn a dressing gown before and did not know the distinction between a man's and a woman's — when a woman passenger called out to him from behind, 'I say,

that's man's W C ' He turned round and exclaimed. 'Why, madame, I am a man'

V N Kudva died in service after a prostate operation I knew him when we were ICS probationers in London in 1922 At that time he had literary ambitions He wanted to write a book on love, but in order to write about it he thought that he should experience it, and so he worked himself into a Platonic passion with an attractive Thiya girl in London His heart broke when she married a handsome Muslim officer of the IMS Thus Kudva equipped himself for writing a novel on the agony of unfulfilled love Whether the novel materialised or not, I do not know

Among my English colleagues, R B MacEwen caught malaria in the Ceded districts and did not recover from it The case of another Englishman, Toovey, was more distressing Try as he might, he could not pass the examination in Tamil, and the Madras Government refused to grant him home leave unless he passed the examination When he was seriously ill he was given leave, and he died on board the ship on his way home The Government of Madras was ticked off by the Secretary of State for its callousness

In 1925, I left the Madras Presidency once and for all and entered the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India My first station was Hyderabad My predecessor, Lynch Blosse, was held up to me as an ideal Under Secretary Soon after I reached Hyderabad I heard that he had a fall from a horse in Indore and was killed

In 1927, I was posted to Peshawar There, too, my immediate predecessor had a tragic end When Galbraith was Political Agent in Gilgit, he went out to bathe in the Naltar stream His wife was found struggling out of her depths, he went to her rescue and both were drowned In 1944, when I visited Gilgit in the course of an overland journey from India to China, I saw his grave bearing the simple inscription

REMEMBER IAN AND MARY GALBRAITH
1939.

All the superior posts in the North-West Frontier Province were manned by the Foreign and Political Department Of the four dozen officers in the N.W F P , only half a dozen were Indians There were three Hindus, namely, Balraj Kapur, Inder Chopra and myself, and three Muslims, namely S B Shah, Khurshed Ali Khan, the nephew

of Sahebzada Sir Abdul Quiyum, the first Chief Minister of the N W F P, and Iskander Ali Mirza On the partition of India all the three Muslim officers opted for Pakistan And all are dead

Iskander Ali Mirza was a colourful figure in the N W F P He was as much a politician as a political officer The manner in which he treated an unlawful procession of Red Shirts was most original He invited the leaders of the procession to his house and treated them to a sumptuous dinner in which a strong purgative had been mixed with the curries, with predictable results

Eventually, Iskander rose to be the Governor-General of Pakistan He was, however, ousted by General Ayub Khan and compelled to live abroad with his second wife who had ousted his first wife, an adorable woman who had presented her husband with half a dozen children and whom we knew and liked. Iskander died in London His second wife was an Iranian and had some pull with the Iranian Government and managed to get a state funeral for him in Teheran How the gods would have chuckled over this spectacle!

From Peshawar I was posted to Ceylon My successor, T L R Chandran, met with an early death He had a premonition that he would die of heart failure He told me once that his father used to be an excessive smoker and died of heart trouble and that he would do likewise Which, indeed, he did

Chandran was one of the few non-Brahmin members of the ICS in Madras In those days, in the Madras Civil List, the letters, E, B and NB were inserted in brackets to show whether a man was an Englishman, a Brahmin or a non-Brahmin The reason was that when a non-Brahmin ministry came into existence under the aegis of the Justice Party the Government wanted to increase the representation of non-Brahmins in the superior services, and since Brahmins began to discard the formerly honoured suffix of Ayyar and Ayyangar lest they should be discriminated against, the device of showing the officers as E, B and NB was adopted Another very promising non-Brahmin member of the ICS, Sengodayan, who came and stayed with us in Ceylon in 1932, died soon after He cut his face while shaving and died of blood poisoning

My next posting was in Delhi as Deputy Secretary to the Government of India I was also sent on deputation to Zanzibar and East Africa to investigate the condition of Indians My report was far from complimentary to the colonial administration, and the Government of India hesitated to publish it Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, a Member of Parliament, asked why my report had not been published; and Sir

Girja Shankar Bajpai, who was then acting as a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, replied, 'The Government of India is marking time' Shankar, our incomparable cartoonist, then came out with a cartoon called 'Marking Time', in which the officers of the Ministry, Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Sir Akbar Hydari, W B Yeats and myself were shown dancing, to the surprise of a horrified chaprasi in the corner, and myself on the wrong foot I seem to be still on the wrong foot, for the other three figures in the cartoon have passed on to another and, one hopes, a better world Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai had a heart attack when he was Governor of Bombay and was cremated with full honours, Sir Akbar Hydari went out shooting as Governor of Assam and came back home and collapsed, and Yeats died of a tropical disease which he had contracted in India Yeats used to be a great admirer of Sir Akbar, and more especially of Lady Hydari, and among his friends he had the nickname, 'the passionate prawn'

From Delhi I was transferred to Baluchistan as Political Agent, Zhob In a cemetery adjoining the P A 's garden, there was an open grave, as it is in all military cemeteries, for the next incumbent He turned out to be my successor, Major Barnes, who was shot dead by a disgruntled Pathan tribesman, whom I, too, used to know and who often complained to me, too, of Government's disregard for his rights Ironically enough, two days after Barnes died, I received a letter from him, perhaps the last letter he wrote, saying 'I am thankful for the absence of acute problems in the Zhob as compared with my last station, Waziristan' Mrs Barnes was a fine musician It used to be said of her that she had the voice of an angel and the temper of a devil

In Bharatpur, where I was Dewan from 1940 to 1943, death spared my colleagues, but was merciless to the members of the royal family, with whom I was on intimate terms Among its victims were the two brothers of the Maharaja, Muttoo and Banchoo, for whom there was a great reception on their return from England where they were students, the Raoji, the Maharaja's uncle, who seemed to have an eye on the throne, the Maharaja's sister, the junior Bibijee, who was a picture of beauty, and saddest of all, the young Maharani of Bharatpur, who was the sister of the Maharaja of Mysore and whose marriage I was largely instrumental in bringing about

Now I entered the field of diplomacy and my first posting was to China For some time, Sir Hugh Weightman was Foreign Secretary With him I used to carry on a weekly correspondence, marked 'private and personal', which he once called 'our weekly effusion of undiplomatic thoughts' Soon after India became independent, he left

the ICS, joined the Persian Oil Company and died in an air-crash His wife, Peggy Weightman, had a premonition of his end she seemed terrified, whenever he travelled by air

When I was Foreign Secretary there came the news of the death, by heart failure, of four of my good friends, Dr Syed Hussain, our Ambassador in Cairo, Ramlal, our Ambassador to Italy, Dhirubhai Desai, our Minister to Switzerland, and his successor, Asaf Ali By a strange coincidence, Dhirubhai Desai, Asaf Ali and their butler, died in three successive years, all on Good Friday When Yezdi Gundevia, who was my Minister in Moscow, was posted as Ambassador to Switzerland in succession to Asaf Ali, we implored him not to spend Good Friday in Berne but to come and spend it with us in Moscow

In my last posting in Moscow, too, death did not spare my colleagues My Military Attache, Brigadier Nanavathi, died in a helicopter accident on his return to India Together with him perished Air Marshal Pinto, whom I came to know when he came to Moscow to negotiate the purchase of Soviet planes and who showed himself to be as good a negotiator as pilot, and General Daulat Singh whom I met last when he came to see me in the Safdarjung Hospital, where I was lying on the point of death with a fractured leg But death preferred a younger and more energetic man

Where and in what form death may come no one can say, but memories survive defying death

(*Indo-British Review*, 1973)

24. This Freedom

Some years ago I read a book called *This Freedom* by R C Hutchinson *This Freedom* was written soon after the women of England won the vote after a strenuous fight put up by the suffragettes The heroine of *This Freedom* is a highly intelligent woman who is so obsessed with the idea of freedom that she asserts it even in her relations with her husband and children, with the result that her life comes crashing round her ears

India has won freedom She fought for it with greater grace and dignity than any other country in the world Indeed she can claim to have pointed to a new and civilised way of striving for independence For this the credit is largely due to Mahatma Gandhi, the prophet of non-violence, who was never tired of exhorting his countrymen to love the British people even while hating British imperialism Credit is also due to Britain which had the perspicacity to see the writing on the wall and left India when the going was good

What have we done with this freedom for which we fought with such dignity and restraint?

Latterly I have been giving some thought to the concept of freedom What has provoked me to do so was a letter from an esteemed friend of mine, Dr. K M Munshi, in regard to an article of mine on the achievements of the USSR I pointed out how the Soviet Union, which had been the sixth highly industrialised State in Europe before the Revolution had now become the first in Europe and the second in the world, how illiteracy, which used to be of the order of 80 per cent, had been abolished how great epidemics like smallpox, plague and cholera which used to ravage the Central Asian Republics and even Russia, had been eliminated, and how life expectancy had almost doubled since the Revolution Above all, the Revolution has retrieved the prestige of Russia

As an instance of the way in which its prestige had declined during the closing days of the Tsars, I mentioned an incident, related in the memoirs of Maurice Paleologue, the last French Ambassador to the Court of the Tsars In 1916, under instructions from the French

Government, he sought an interview with the Tsar and requested him to put more Russian soldiers into the War The Tsar observed that already more Russians had been fighting than the British and the French combined But, said Paleologue, the population of Russia greatly exceeded that of England and France The Tsar observed that even allowing for that disparity, more Russian soldiers, proportionately to the British and the French, had been fighting in the war Paleologue then hummed and hawed and mumbled that, after all, whatever standard one applied, whether the standard of literacy or culture, the Russian and the Frenchman were not in the same class In other words, he implied that the life of a Russian was cheaper and more expendable than that of a Frenchman This has always been the attitude of the strong towards the weak, and it was this which precipitated the Russian Revolution

Dr Munshi wrote to me that he had read my article with great interest, but he would have liked me to add something to the following effect

But, as the saying goes, 'man does not live by bread alone' He must have freedom of thought, expression and association Freedom is not complete without freedom to differ or Freedom from Fear, for fear warps human behaviour, it debases culture, it makes man a coward and degrades him

These statements, taken by themselves, are unexceptionable Yet each of these statements needs definition, not in order to restrict its connotation, but rather to enrich it

'Man does not live by bread alone' This is true, but man cannot live without bread either There are millions of people, especially in Asia and Africa, who have to live for days without bread (or rice) and for months and years without an adequate quantity of it A man who has never felt the lack of bread feels that he cannot live by bread alone But, for a man who has no bread, bread is the primary requirement I cannot put this idea better than in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru

In the past, democracy has been taken chiefly to mean political democracy, roughly represented by the idea of every person having a vote It is obvious that a vote by itself does not mean very much to a person who is down and out and starving Such a person will be much more interested in food to eat than in a vote Therefore, political democracy by itself is not enough except that it may be used to obtain

a gradually increasing measure of economic democracy The good things of life must become available to more and more people and gross inequalities must be removed

I agree that man must have freedom of thought, expression and association Thought, of course, cannot be curbed even the successor of St Peter could not control the thought of Galileo The Pope could control Galileo's expression of his thought, he could make him recant his statement that the earth was moving round the sun But in the same breath Galileo mumbled to himself 'All the same it moves'

Freedom of expression is desirable and necessary, but it cannot be unrestricted Almost all countries recognise that this freedom should be subject to certain restrictions, for example, those contained in the law of sedition or the law against obscenity

The scope of laws restricting freedom depends on circumstances circumstances of place and time What may be necessary, desirable or permissible in the USA or the USSR need not necessarily be so in India For instance, *Lady Chatterly's Lover* (the unexpurgated edition) is banned in India Not so in England today In all the previous editions of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the four-letter word, denoting intercourse between man and woman, was taboo, it has appeared in the latest edition In my own autobiography, *Many Worlds*, this word, uttered by a drunken tommy, was at first crossed out by Hawkins, the Manager of the Oxford University Press, but he allowed it to appear in the second edition of my book By that time it had gained respectability by having been included in that final arbiter of taste, the *Oxford English Dictionary.*

Freedom of publication is essential and yet no State can do without censorship How quixotic censorship can be was shown in Turkey recently when it placed a ban on the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*—a ban which it had the good sense to withdraw The Government of Pakistan used to ban the recital of Tagore's songs and poems over the radio in Decca, and this was one of the factors which embittered the relations between the two halves of Pakistan Tsarist Russia used to ban the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau and other philosophers but permitted the import of Karl Marx's *Das Capital.* During the Cultural Revolution, China banned the works of Leo Tolstoy and William Shakespeare Even the music of Beethoven was banned as degenerate

In acting thus Mao Tse-tung was following a famous precedent in Chinese history In 255 B C a mighty Chinese emperor, Chinhshih-Huang-ti, who built the Great Wall and proclaimed himself 'the First

Emperor', carried out a great burning of the books, including the works of Confucius, on the ground that they were prone to breed 'dangerous thoughts' against his regime In this way, he hoped that his dynasty would last 'ten thousand years' In fact, it lasted fifty years! On his death the works of Confucius emerged from the strangest hiding-places and exercised a profound influence on Chinese minds for more than two thousand five hundred years Today, however, Confucius is at a discount

Such instances show how arbitrary governments can be in restricting the freedom of expression and publication Yet does not our own experience show that freedom of expression can be carried too far? Behind the idea that people should have freedom to express their views, whether they are sound or not and however unsound they may be, lies the hope that somehow, as a result of the clash of conflicting opinions, sound views will ultimately prevail But very often what happens is that just as bad money drives out the good, so also bad views drive out the good ones

The so-called public opinion need not necessarily be the opinion of the public On this point George Kennan, the distinguished American scholar and diplomat, has some pertinent observations to make 'what purports to be public opinion', said George Kennan, 'in most countries is often not really the consensus of the feelings of the minds of the people at all but rather the expression of the interests of special, highly vocal minorities—politicians, commentators and publicity-seekers of all sorts'

Freedom of association, again, is a coveted freedom Yet the frequency of strikes, which form a corollary of this freedom, is a most disquieting phenomenon in India the strikes of labourers, students, teachers, engineers, doctors and of the most highly-paid men in India, the pilots of airlines—strikes, in season and out of season, halting production and causing a daily loss of several lakhs of rupees And what is one to think of such ridiculous scenes as naked sadhus marching on Parliament with the rosary in one hand and the spear in the other?

Finally, Dr Munshi pointed out the paramount importance of 'freedom from fear' 'Fear', he said in Gandhian terms, 'warps human behaviour, it debases culture, it makes a man coward and degrades him' That is true, but fear of what? Man has no greater fear than the fear of want, the fear as to where the next meal is to come from, how the anguished cry of his hungry children is to be assuaged The poet may say that sweet are the uses of adversity, and the philosopher may

say that the poor are always with us But there is no greater curse than poverty and starvation which put a man in constant fear of the prospect of even being able to live It is this fear, more than any other, which warps human behaviour, debases culture, makes man a coward and degrades him

To sum up, the time has come when emphasis should be laid not on freedom but on discipline, lest the stability and progress of the country should be irretrievably injured by the indiscriminate exercise of various freedoms

The greater the dangers facing a country, the greater the need for discipline and restraint No country has faced greater dangers in its history than the USSR in the first few decades of its existence Except for the monolithic unity which the Soviet Government aimed at and established during these dangerous decades by sacrificing various types of freedom, it is arguable whether the USSR, which was an island of communism in a sea of capitalism, would have been able to survive the hostility of the rest of the world, nor would it have been able to resist Hitler who contemptuously called it 'a Colossus on feet of clay', even as Bismarck had called the Russians 'a female people' There would be general agreement that no sacrifice is too great when the very survival of a State is at stake

It is an excess of freedom, or, in other words licence, and not lack of it which is undermining the foundations of democracy in India On this point Mahatma Gandhi has made some profound observations He said

Democrats must be utterly unselfish They must not think and dream in terms of self or Party

Democracy and violence go ill together

Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep

Nothing is so easy as to train mobs, for the simple reason that they have no mind, no premeditation They act in a frenzy I do not mind governmental fury as I mind mob fury

I wrote on these lines to Dr Munshi and am happy to say that the response was handsome and, indeed, gracious He wrote to me that my point of view roused a ready echo in his heart, for has not Gandhiji himself said, 'To the hungry even God shall appear only in the form of food.'

(All India Radio, 1975, based on the author's article in *Capital*, 1973)

25. Parliamentary Democracy in the Indian Set-up

Socrates was once asked by a disciple what was the best form of government He replied, 'For which country? And in which century?'

As the old saying goes, one man's meat is another man's poison What may be good for one country in one century may not be so good for another country in another century Meat, which is wholesome for a sound stomach, may be injurious when the digestion is impaired

In our school and college days we were taught to believe, almost as an article of faith, that Parliamentary democracy, prevalent in England, was the best form of government The nineteenth century was the heyday of Parliamentary democracy Its success depended on a variety of circumstances the two-Party system, the existence of a responsible Opposition and the acceptance of certain conventions which acted as a ring within which politicians could play their game The main Parties in England were the Whigs and the Tories, who subsequently came to be called Liberals and Conservatives The advent of the Labour Party has complicated the situation So has the intrusion of ideology, though British political life has been less affected by it than other countries The result is that today the working of the Parliamentary system in England is by no means so smooth as in previous centuries

On the European Continent Parliamentary democracy has never been a shining success The conditions, just mentioned, for its success were absent In France, there was nothing like a two-Party system There, Parties split into groups and formed strange combinations which ruled the country for a time and then lapsed into oblivion, so much so that the duration of a Ministry in France was often no more than a few months, and every now and then France had to be saved from chaos by a military dictatorship But men in glass houses must not throw stones In Kerala, the completion by the Chief Minister, C Achutha Menon, of the normal tenure of five years was so abnormal that it became the subject of State-wide jubilation and nation-wide applause

The alternative to the Parliamentary system is the Presidential

system of government, as in the USA But the main condition for the success of the Presidential government is that you must have a President who can govern Dean Rusk once defined the President's unique position thus

'The President must prepare himself for those solemn moments when, after all the advice from every quarter is in, he must ascend his lonely pinnacle and decide what he must do There are solemn moments when the whole world holds its breath and our fate is in his hands Then every fragment of his experience, all that he has read and learnt, his understanding of his own nation and of the world about him, his faith, conscience and courage are brought to bear'

How few American Presidents have there been who have come anywhere near this ideal, especially in the post-War period!

In the fifties, Americans, who have a gift for laughing at themselves, had a saying that President Roosevelt showed that man could be President as long as he wanted, that President Truman showed that anyone could be President of America, and that President Eisenhower showed that America could get on very well without a President at all Eisenhower was a most estimable man, but as President he was almost a non-entity he was entirely under the thumb of John Foster Dulles, the redoubtable protagonist of the cold war When President Eisenhower needlessly took upon himself the responsibility for sending a spy plane, the U2, over the Soviet Union, which was shot down over the Urals—an incident which postponed the detente between the Great Powers for a decade

The fact is that the Presidential system which invests one person with fateful responsibilities, fateful for humanity itself in this nuclear age, cannot ensure good government or world peace

As distinguished from the Parliamentary system and the Presidential system, the twentieth century has seen the rise of the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe The People's Democracy of the USSR, which was the pioneer, has certainly delivered the goods In the course of less than two generations it has made up for centuries of backwardness and marched forward to become not only a Great Power, but to use a much abused word, a super-Power And a nation of illiterate muzhiks, ridden by disease, ignorance and superstition, has been turned into a strong and confident nation with universal literacy and a high degree of culture

This miracle, however, was not accomplished without sacrifice

Indeed in certain phases it was attended by ruthlessness and cruelty Joseph Stalin justified it by saying that 'barbarism can only be driven out by barbarous means'

Such statements jar on Indian ears, attuned to the theory which Mahatma Gandhi was never tired of preaching that a good end cannot be secured by bad means About 2,500 years ago, Gautama Buddha had said 'Hatred cannot be conquered by hatred It can only be conquered by love Such has been its nature and such it will always be ' But let us not forget that India, the land of Buddha, also produced Kautilya, known as the Indian Machiavelli, who said 'What produces favourable results is good policy, and what produces unfavourable results is bad policy ' In other words, the end justifies the means

Philosophy apart, what should be our political set-up? For a century, our intelligentsia has been wedded to the conception of a Parliamentary system, and with the advent of adult suffrage, the masses too have got used to it To wipe out this period as a mere interlude is impossible The idea of Parliamentary democracy has sunk too deep into the Indian mind to be rooted out After all, democracy is not an end in itself but a means to an end, a means to attain certain objectives, and those have been clearly defined in our Constitution We must not shut our eyes to the evils which have crept into the working of the Parliamentary system in India and which have hampered, instead of hastening, the attainment of our social objectives Mere tampering with the Constitution will not do What is needed is to re-create the conditions, in which Parliamentary democracy has been a success elsewhere, namely, the organisation of a minimum number of Parties on clear-cut lines, the development of a sense of responsibility on the part of the Opposition and the establishment and observance of certain conventions which will ensure the smooth working of Parliamentary government This cannot be done in a day It means nothing more or less than the re-education of men and women, and especially those engaged in politics, so that they might put the welfare of the nation before all other considerations—personal, parochial, sectarian and ideological It implies, to use Mahatma Gandhi's magnificent phrase, a change of heart

(AIR, New Delhi, 1976)

26. A Portrait of Parliament

When Oliver Cromwell sat for a portrait of his by a well-known painter of his time, he asked him to make sure that it was a faithful likeness, with the moles, warts, blotches and all That is the kind of picture, glowing and unsparing, which Hiren Mukerji has painted in his *Portrait of Parliament*

Hiren is singularly equipped to do so He was in Parliament for full twenty-five years He was not only *in* Parliament but he was *of* it he belonged to it He threw himself heart and soul into all parliamentary activities Indeed he must be regarded as one of the great parliamentarians India has thrown up

Hiren has another, rare qualification to write such a book Though he was in Parliament and of it, he was at the same time above and beyond it Or, as he puts it modestly, 'I have been somewhat away from it all' His scholarly outlook remained intact in spite of the din and dust and the not-infrequent dust storms in Parliament He had the supreme virtue of detachment The professor in him was not stifled by the politician He could be at once actor and spectator in the exciting parliamentary game and almost played the part of the Chorus in a Greek play

What is the essential nature of Parliament? Is it a semi-divine institution, reflecting and echoing the voice of the people, which has been proverbially equated with the voice of God? Or is it, as Carlyle said, 'a talking shop' with '600 talking asses'? Parliament, after all consists of men, and even more fundamental questions can be asked about the nature of man In my young days I firmly believed that man is made in the image of God but as I grew older I began to have doubts These were confirmed when I saw the concentration camp at Oswiciem where four million Jews, Slavs, Poles and men of other 'inferior races' were brutally done to death And my doubts have been further confirmed by the spectacle of man persisting in the manufacture of the 'humane' neutron bomb which does not destroy property but 'only' human life 'Haven't we now reached', asked Svan Hangaard, the leader of the Liberal Party in Denmark, 'the very abyss of callous inhuman military thinking?'

Hiren does not attempt to answer, or even to raise, any pseudo-philosophical questions He is content to describe in vivid and often humorous detail the changing panorama of Parliament

That Parliament has been changing, for the better or for the worse, there is little doubt There was, to use Hiren's phrase, 'a certain seemliness' about the first Parliament It was led by a man who sought 'to light a glow in the hearts of the people' and almost succeeded in doing so At that time the average member of Parliament was different from the 'new type of legislator' who crept, or rather burst, into Parliament in later years and whose distinguishing qualities were 'a lot of brass, a rhinocero's skin, a capacity for muscling in and oh!, sheer lung power, added of course to some demogogic horse sense'

Even in the early halcyon days there were occasional 'scenes' in Parliament but they were well controlled There was, to use another phrase of Hiren's, 'a certain cleanliness' about Parliament and a general desire to avoid 'excessive sensationalism, stunt-mongering and sheer unashamed catering to the requirements of reactionary interests at home and their patrons abroad who are keen on nothing so much as the denigration of this country and the cluttering of our path of advance'

Referring to the bad manners exhibited in Parliament, Hiren recalls a letter written by a British Labour M P , Atkinson, to his constituents in 1966 in the course of which he writes 'I am ashamed of Parliament and want sincerely to apologise to the constituents of my country I was elected to do a job, not to be a part of an idiotic circus ' 'There is no harm', says Hiren mildly, 'in adequately combining liveliness and spirit with dignity and decorum'

Hiren has given full credit to Jawaharlal Nehru for the 'seemliness' and 'cleanliness' which characterised the earlier Parliaments Nehru had an innate respect, amounting to reverence, for Parliament To him the voice of the people, however raucous, was the voice of God He never suspected, as Alexander Pope did, that

The people's voice is odd,
It is, and is not, the voice of God

Sometimes, Nehru's excessive respect for Parliament prevented him from taking decisive action Hiren has lucidly explained how Nehru's almost mystic reverence for Parliament, which was often out to thwart him though never to fight him, and his 'fastidious hesitancies' were to some extent responsible for the total deterioration of our relations with China

Unlike her father, Mrs Gandhi was not a respector of Parliament From the outset, she seems to have found its proceedings boring and kept away from it as often as she could, and eventually she had no compunction in turning Parliament, to use Hiren's vivid phrase, into 'a captive body Hiren, however, feels that it is not fair to 'concentrate criticism on the prime personality in the picture without reference to the larger setting'

Hiren ends the book with a few reflections on the moot question whether India's political problem can be successfully tackled by a Parliamentary system In this connection he asserts that the view that the establishment of a two-Party system will be helpful is 'not only a simplistic but a dangerous illusion' Quite rightly he points out that the formation of two Parties such as in the USA, where the Democrats and the Republicans are 'only semantically but by no means basically different' will be no solution But there is no reason why, instead of the present medley of Parties, a minimum number of Parties, say two or three, with well-defined principles should not evolve themselves This is easier said than done, but in it lies the only hope for the survival of the Parliamentary system of government in India

27 Freedom and Discipline in Democracy

In the second half of March, India was the scene of what more than one foreign newspaper called 'a political earthquake' An earthquake it was, but free from the physical havoc which generally accompanies earthquakes of such magnitude, thanks to the gospel of non-violence which the Father of the Nation had dinned into the heads of the people

The outcome of the elections in 1977 was not only different from, but the very reverse of, what it was in 1971 In 1971 there was a veritable Indira wave which swept the Congress triumphantly to power not only with an absolute but with a two-thirds majority In 1977 the Janata wave took the place of the Indira wave in 1971

Almost all observers are agreed that in reversing the verdict of 1971 so decisively, the Indian electorate was not behaving quixotically Its conduct was very different from that of the Roman mob in Shakespeare's play which, swayed by the eloquence of Mark Antony, turned the tables on the assassins of Julius Ceasar

In the elections of 1977 the pattern of voting in the South was materially different from that in the North The entire 'Aryavarta' voted against the Congress The entire 'Dravidistan' voted for it It is as if the Janata wave stopped short of the Vindhya mountains, or at any rate lost its force on its way to Kanyakumari

For this disparity between the North and the South there were substantial reasons What has come to be known as 'the extra-Constitutional caucus' in the Centre did not have, or was not given, an opportunity for operating in the South The southern States escaped the excesses, associated with the caucus in States like Haryana and UP, especially in the matter of compulsory sterilisation

But more than personalities were involved in the elections The elections touched the age-old question—freedom-versus discipline

The nature of freedom and the extent to which it should be tempered by discipline is a question which has intrigued political philosophers as well as politicians from time immemorial. Our electorate, largely illiterate and poverty-stricken as it is, showed good

sense to an uncanny degree in answering the question in the general elections of 1971 and 1977

To simplify matters to the point of absurdity, our electorate may be said to have voted for discipline in 1971 and for freedom in 1977 What India needed in 1971 was discipline What it longed for in 1977 was freedom And what India needs permanently is a blend of freedom and discipline or a disciplined democracy

At the end of the sixties democracy in India was going off the rails All the evils of democracy, groupism, casteism, parochialism, sectarianism and defectionism were rampant Democracy was fast becoming demogogy The ruling principle seemed to be 'Each man for himself—or each party, each group and each Union for itself—and the devil take the hindmost' The Congress lost its majority at the Centre and in the States and India was faced with the prospect of a series of coalition governments, and coalition governments were notoriously unstable, except in a time of real national emergency Most foreign observers thought that India was heading for chaos or military dictatorship And Philip Talbot, an Assistant Secretary of State in the USA, said, 'India is going down the drain'

The elections of 1971 silenced these Cassandras The electorate returned the Congress, which was then the only Party capable of ensuring stability, not only with an absolute, but a two-thirds, majority That was not a minute too soon, for before long India was faced with the grimmest hour in its history, which also turned out to be the most glorious, the Bangladesh crisis, when two Great Powers, and many not-so-great, almost ranged themselves against it

The voting of the electorate in 1977 was equally significant Basically it was a vote for freedom The nation had been 'cribbed, cabined and confined' within the steel frame of the Emergency Whatever justification there might have been for its proclamation, the Emergency had outlived its purpose It had also resulted in the harassment, and worse, of innocent individuals, as in the Rajan case, which occurred in an exceptionally well-governed State—Kerala On the eve of the elections of 1971, the pendulum had swung to one extreme, total freedom, and on the eve of the elections of 1977 it had swung to the other extreme, total discipline On both occasions the electorate tried to set it right

In 1971, the danger was that freedom might become licence, and in 1977 the fear was that discipline might become dictatorship Mahatma Gandhi made some profound observations regarding the role of discipline in a democracy 'Democracy', he said, 'and violence go ill

together Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep Nothing is so easy as to train mobs for the simple reason that they have no mind, no premeditation They act in a frenzy I do not mind governmental fury as I mind mob fury'

The primary function of government, especially in a country like ours which has only recently attained independence, is to ensure, to use a phrase of Dr Sun Yat-sen, the architect of the Chinese Revolution of 1911, 'the people's livelihood' Dr Sun Yat-sen based the newly-formed Republic of China on what he called 'The Three People's Principles', namely, Nationalism, Democracy and the People's Livelihood However, the Kuomintang government, under his successor, President Chiang Kai-shek, grossly neglected the third Principle of Dr Sun Yat-sen, and that is why it fell ignominiously before the onslaught of Communism, which promised to ensure the People's Livelihood Mahatma Gandhi realised its importance, he once said that 'to the hungry even God shall appear only in the form of food' Man, however, cannot live by bread alone, he has other yearnings, as demonstrated in the recent elections If the Janata government can deliver the goods without unduly restricting our freedom or allowing it to become licence, if it can fulfil, or go some way towards fulfilling, our nationally accepted goal, namely, a socialistic pattern of society, it will have set an example to the world, and particularly to the countries of 'the third world' which, in their efforts to rise from the abyss of poverty and misery after centuries of colonial exploitation, have been oscillating between freedom and discipline, democracy and dictatorship.

(Feature Unit, 1977)

28 Politics and Politicking

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan visited India in connection with the Gandhi centenary in 1969 and indulged in some plain speaking, which he was entitled to do as 'the Frontier Gandhi' 'The trouble with you, Indians', he said, 'is politicking'

He did not define politicking, but what he meant was quite clear By politicking he meant engaging oneself in politics for self-aggrandisement, or for the aggrandisement of one's party, one's group or one's community even at the sacrifice of the country's interest

Looking back, the history of independent India can be divided into two more or less equal periods—1947 to 1962 and 1963 to 1978 The earlier period, under the continuing inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi and the firm guidance of Jawaharlal Nehru, could be called an era of politics, the latter was an era of politicking These periods are separated by that traumatic event, the invasion of India by China Thereafter, Nehru was no longer the old or, rather, the eternally young Jawaharlal It is not suggested that the element of politicking was altogether absent from the earlier period, or that the latter period has produced no politician of the highest calibre But most people will agree that there has been a deterioration in political standards during the past decade and a half

Human society has never been exempt from the evils of politicking in some degree or other, but some forms of government are more prone to these evils than others

I have recently been reading a little book called *Going Up?* by one Ninan I Chacko, which purports to contain a number of letters written by the author to his son on the art of going up, or getting on, in a society where values and principles are at a discount and expediency is the rule He has quoted profusely from various writers, classical and contemporary I have made use of these quotations to illustrate the art of politicking They may seem savagely exaggerated, but I hope they will sink into the minds and consciences of the unabashed practitioners of the art of politicking.

Dr Johnson's definition of politics as 'the last refuge of a scoundrel'

is well known George III amplified it and said that 'politics are a trade for a rascal, not a gentleman' That can be dismissed as a peevish royal outburst, but what is one to think of the observation of Arnold Toynbee, the world historian, that 'politics is the slum area of social life where scoundrels seek refuge'?

A politician must necessarily cultivate the art of speaking, or, as it is vulgarly called, the gift of the gab He has to play up, or down, to his audiences and clothe his sentiments in high falutin' words so as to impress, or bamboozle, them Wordsworth mused

Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
Of smooth and solemnised complacencies,
By which, in Christian lands, from age to age,
Profession mocks performance? Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary of the hollow words
Which states and kingdoms utter when they talk
Of truth and justice

'Corruption', said Edward Gibbon, 'is the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty' Nowhere is constitutional liberty more cherished than in the USA and yet nowhere is corruption more rife

Corruption can take many forms One is nepotism This, too, is an ancient evil Shakespeare said

'Tis the curse of service,
Perferment goes by litter and affection
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to the first

Napoleon who sent his relations right and left to rule over the kingdoms of Europe is said to have exclaimed 'It is not my fault if every member of my family is a genius' That is what many parents in high position think of their children

Defectionism is a sure sign of politicking as distinct from politics It is a modern word, but there is an old graphic name for a defector—a turncoat An equally effective name, invented in the late sixties, when defectionism was rampant in India, is Aya Ram-Gaya Ram The game of playing Aya Ram-Gaya Ram is going on briskly even now When Sir John Simon, who used to be a staunch Liberal, joined the Conservative Party, Winston Churchill said 'Many a better man has crossed the floor before him, but none has left such a slimy trail of

hypocricy behind him ' The entire political field in India is disfigured by such trails

A clear distinction between a true politician and, so to say, a politicker is that the former puts duties before rights, or both on the same level, whereas the latter puts rights before duties Edward Gibbon said of someone, whose name I forgot, that he 'well remembered that he had a salary to receive and only forgot that he had a duty to perform ' It is this attitude which is responsible for many an arbitrary strike When the ruler of Gaulle, King Brennus, invaded Closium the residents appealed to Rome for protection, and Rome sent three ambassadors to speak to him When they asked him by what right he invaded the country, Brennus said 'our right is in our swords ' Nowadays, workers, students and even government officials seem to follow the motto 'Our right is in our numbers'

They are not content to rely on numbers alone They do not grudge the use of swords invigilators are assaulted, buses are burnt and trains are wrecked, if their demands are not conceded They seem to have completely forgotten Mahatma Gandhi's words, 'Democracy and violence go ill together I do not mind governmental fury as I mind mob fury '

Anuerin Bevan made a sedate observation with which many will agree 'I have never regarded politics', he said, 'as the arena of morals It is the arena of interests ' The Renaissance marked the final divorce between morality and politics in Europe Thereafter, international politics have developed in a wholly amoral, not to say immoral, manner, culminating in two World Wars and the prospect of a Third World War, which may well be a nuclear war and spell the end of civilisation

How true is Aneurin Bevan's remark is shown by recent events in the USA President Carter has been the most vocal champion of human rights, and yet whenever human rights conflicted with American interests he has let the latter prevail Indeed, in the hands of some of his advisers the human rights campaign has become a weapon for prosecuting America's feud with the USSR

In the meantime the most flagrant violators of human rights such as the racist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia are still going strong with Western connivance, if not Western patronage And, strangely enough, they have the cynical support of a recently emancipated Asian state, China China, in its blind hatred of the USSR and forgetting that it itself had been a victim of exploitation, has been putting its weight behind the former imperialist powers who, in

insidious ways, are obstructing the march of freedom in Africa In defiance of the third world and, indeed, of world opinion, as it expressed itself in the UN, China is also demurring to the conversion of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and the removal of all foreign bases from there

Mr Carter's predecessor, President Eisenhower, was a high-minded man who was animated by a sincere desire to promote peace and goodwill 'Every gun that is made', he said, 'every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final analysis, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed The world in arms is not spending money alone It is spending the sweat of labourers, the genius of scientists, the hopes of its children This is not a way of life, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron ' Yet how little Eisenhower was able to do to move forward towards peace!

Much the same can be said of President Carter In his case, too, there is a yawning gulf between words and action, rhetoric and performance The exigencies of internal politics have resulted in politicking on a large scale in the USA, and this has vitiated its foreign policy

In India it is a matter for thankfulness that politicking has not invaded the realm of external affairs True, the Opposition used to criticise India's foreign policy when the Congress was in power, but the duty of the Opposition after all is to oppose Once the Opposition came to power it has adhered commendably and steadfastly to the principles laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru There might be differences in tone and style but the substance is much the same

Let us hope that India will continue to avoid politicking in the conduct of foreign affairs and reduce it to the minimum in the internal field, remembering the Father of the Nation to whom politics was almost a part of his religion

(Feature Unit, 1977)

29. The End of an Era?

The year 1977 was often referred to as marking the end of an era Such glowing expressions were only natural under the euphoria produced by the brilliant victory of the Janata Party in the momentous general elections held in March 1977 But such expressions continue to be used even now and deserve to be scrutinised

The end of an era Of which era? The era of Mrs Indira Gandhi? The era of Jawaharlal Nehru? The era of the Indian National Congress?

Clearly the general elections of March 1977 marked the end of a chapter, in the sense that it brought about the end of the government of Mrs Indira Gandhi, and that was their primary purpose But a chapter does not make an era An era may be defined as a definite historical period with distinctive features Mrs Gandhi's regime had certain features peculiar to itself and Mrs Gandhi had a peculiar style of functioning In essence, however, her period was a continuation of the Nehru era and its concluding phase was an aberration from it

Jawaharlal Nehru, on the contrary, can truly be said to have launched a new era in Indian and, to some extent, in Asian and African history His vision of India was that of a democratic structure upheld by the triple pillars—non-alignment, secularism and a socialistic pattern of society Can that period be said to have ended with the general elections of 1977? Can the principles of non-alignment, secularism and a socialistic pattern of society be said to have become obsolete?

The Janata government has shown in deeds as well as in words that non-alignment continues to be the kernel of our foreign policy This was most recently demonstrated during the visit of President Carter President Carter had been saying that India had been veering to the side of the Soviet Union and that soon it would be 'moving back towards us' But the Prime Minister left him in no doubt regarding the abiding character of our continuing friendship with the USSR and the reasons therefor To Mr. Carter this must have been a lesson in 'genuine non-alignment'

It is not the purpose of this article to hold an inquisition into the Janata government's record in the field of secularism it is rather premature to do that But the concept of secularism, like the concept of non-alignment, is not the outcome of one man's brain-wave, but the product of India's own history and philosophy Secularism implies equal respect for all religions and non-discrimination as between the followers of different religions and ideologies This follows from the distinctive Hindu refusal to regard Truth as the monopoly of any one religion or to regard any Prophet as the sole medium for salvation

The principles of secularism and non-alignment are derived from our hoary tradition, in preserving which the Janata government is as keen as any other, and the Jana Sangh professes to be more keen than any other Party Therefore, apart from the proved practical usefulness of these principles, the Janata government can be expected not to throw these principles to the winds but to implement them as best as they can

As far as the socialistic pattern of society is concerned, that, too, is a nationally accepted goal Nehru was careful to define this goal as a socialistic pattern and not any particular brand of socialism There may be, and doubtless there are, differences regarding the manner in which that goal can be reached For instance, the amount of attention to be given to agriculture as compared with industry is a perennially interesting and controversial question, on which opinions are bound to differ and do differ even among the members of the Janata Party But this should not be taken to mean the abandonment of the great goal of a socialistic pattern of society

Thus the Nehru era is still continuing in spite of the elections of 1977 and will continue for a long time to come This is part of a still broader era, the Gandhian era, and is by no means opposed to it After all, it was Mahatma Gandhi himself who designated Nehru as 'my political heir' Mahatma Gandhi was primarily a prophet, one, of whom Einstein said, 'Generations hence men would find it hard to believe that such a man in flesh and blood walked on this earth of ours ' He was, like Christ or Buddha, a man of universal dimensions, and proclaimed certain eternal values for all men and nations to follow But, to assert that we have now—only now—entered the Gandhian era and that henceforward the Government of India will be conducted in accordance with the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, will be as inane as for a European statesman to say that in the future the governments of Europe will be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Sermon on the Mount

There is one sense in which the year 1977 may mark the end of an era It seems to presage the end of the era of the Indian National Congress During the British period the Congress was the one political organisation which could truly call itself national, for it stood for the emancipation of the entire people of India and not of any section thereof Its primary objective was to obtain India's political independence, though it never lost sight of wider objectives and that ultimate objective which Mahatma Gandhi magnificently defined as 'wiping every tear from every eye' But once the Congress had achieved its principal objective and India became independent, it ceased to have its *raison d'etre* as a political Party Mahatma Gandhi, with almost uncanny prescience, exhorted the Congress to dissolve itself as a political organisation, and dedicate itself to social service in the broadest sense of the word, so that real political Parties may arise on normal lines

Failure to accept Gandhiji's advice is ultimately responsible for the misfortunes that have befallen the Congress, and the nation, and the degeneration of our political life, resulting in such evils as the resurgence of groupism, casteism, communalism, parochialism and defectionism The Congress, now irretrievably split and shaken by the lurid revelations before the Shah Commission, has lost its credibility Communism, too, has become a house divided against itself The Janata Party which, in a moment of supreme elation after a dire Emergency, sprang out of discordant elements, is yet to show itself as a homogeneous Party with a coherent socio-economic programme During the past quinquennium Kerala, despite the Rajan case, presented a less dismal picture than the rest of India, but that was largely due to the emergence, on the political scene, of a man of unimpeachable integrity—Mr C Achutha Menon Such men are hard to find

Almost all the newly-independent nations of Asia and Africa have been oscillating between freedom and discipline, freedom degenerating into licence and discipline rising to dictatorship We had hoped that India would be an exception, but recent events have shown that it is not The bad old days of the Emergency are over, but we seem to be drifting back to the bad old pre-Emergency days, with rising prices, falling production, and strikes, lock-outs, bandhs and gheraos, not always unaccompanied by violence, as a result of which, according to official statistics, 294,799 man-days were lost in the first four months of Janata rule (Figures for subsequent months are not available)

The only way in which such oscillations between total freedom and

total discipline can be forestalled is for two or three Parties to evolve themselves, with well-defined principles, intelligible but not intoxicating to the electorate That, as England has shown, is the only setting in which Parliamentary democracy, based on the Westminster model, as ours is, can function smoothly and effectively Of such a development, alas, there are few signs at present But I suppose things must get worse before they get better, and one hopes, almost against hope, that the sheer logic of necessity will eventually lead to the establishment of a two-Party, or, at the most, three-Party system If this happens—and happen it must, for otherwise the future of our democracy is bleak—we shall have seen the end of an era in another sense, the era of 'politicking', which the Frontier Gandhi called, and which Mahatma Gandhi, if he were alive, might himself have called 'the bane of India'

(Feature Unit, 1977)

PART III

INDIA AND THE WORLD

30. Indian Diplomacy Ancient and Modern

Long before European diplomacy, and Europe itself, assumed shape, the art of diplomacy had been developed in Asia, and particularly in India Who could have conducted himself as a more astute diplomat than Hanuman in the Court of Ravana, as described in the Ramayana? Even in those days, the person of an envoy was regarded as sacred When Ravana, incensed at Hanuman's insolence, threatens to kill him, Vibhishana, the wise, intervenes and reminds him that an envoy may never be killed Diplomatic immunity, however, did not prevent his being disgraced, for his tail was set on fire

In our time, too, we have had instances of diplomats being insulted and humiliated, as during the Cultural Revolution in China, when Soviet Diplomats were molested, Indian diplomats were assaulted and British diplomat was made to leap-frog across the airfield in Peking, and the British Embassy was set ablaze But those days are gone, one hopes, never to return

Take, again, Krishna's mission as an envoy of the Pandavas to the Court of their bitter rivals, the Kauravas It has an even more contemporary ring than Hanuman's visit to Sri Lanka Draupadi asks Krishna why he is undertaking such a mission which is foredoomed to failure Krishna replies 'I shall go to the Court of the Kauravas to present your case in the best light and try and get them to accept your demands, but if my efforts fail and war becomes inevitable we shall show the world that we are right and they are wrong, so that the world may not misjudge between us'

Here, in a nutshell, is the essence of diplomacy, which may be defined as the art of negotiation Its primary purpose is to avoid war, but if war should become inevitable the world should know who was responsible for it Even in Sri Krishna's days, public opinion was a factor to be taken into account But public opinion had not yet become, as it has now done, a force to be placated or a monster to be excited or appeased with all the fabricated weapons of febrile propaganda

In India, by the fourth century B C , in the time of the Mauryan

Empire, diplomacy had already become a formidable weapon in the armoury of the state It also found a formidable exponent in Kautilya, Chandra Gupta Maurya's Foreign Minister In his famous treatise, *Arthasastra*, he has described the functions of a diplomat thus

'The transmission of the views of his government, the maintenance of treaties, the upholding of the claims of his state, if necessary by threat, and the gaining of friends The creation of secret organisations, the gathering of information, the nullification of treaties unfavourable to one's state, the winning over of government servants—these too form the duties of an envoy The envoy shall cultivate in particular the officers of the government in tribal areas and border regions He shall compare the military and economic strength of the country to which he is accredited with that of his own, and he should ascertain the size and the location of forts and treasuries containing valuables'

This passage was written 2,200 years ago Yet, the Foreign Minister of a Great Power today might, and in fact does, give instructions to his Ambassadors on these lines, if not in these words Only, he would mark them 'personal', 'confidential', 'secret' or 'top secret' And, in some countries, the more secret a document is, the more surely it will leak out

Broadly speaking, there may be said to be two schools of diplomacy the idealistic and the realistic Broadly speaking again, India was, in the first decade of its existence as an independent state, inclined to follow an idealistic policy, springing from, though not tallying with, the gospel of Mahatma Gandhi After all, Gandhiji had invented a golden key to national independence, non-violence Might not that serve as a golden key to world peace too?

India was never tired of stressing the relation between ways and means It is not merely immoral but futile to secure a good end through bad means 'Hatred', said Gautama Buddha long ago, 'cannot be conquered by hatred, it can only be conquered by love Such has always been its nature and such it shall be'

To start with, it seemed as if India's policy of non-alignment, backed by its faith in non-violence, would be a sure guarantee of peace

The realism of Kautilya was an antidote to the idealism of Gautama Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi As an example of his stark realism, let us recall his definition of a friend and an enemy, in the international sense That state, he said, which is on the frontier of one's state is your

enemy, and that state which is on the frontier of the state which is on your frontier is your friend

Kautilya's definition of an enemy may seem brutal Yet it conforms to historical experience England and France have been neighbours, though separated by a stretch of sea, and yet they fought the Hundred Years' War and many other wars as well France and Germany are neighbours and yet almost historical enemies, so much so that twice in our life-time this enmity turned Europe into a graveyard Germany and Russia are neighbours and there is no love lost between them

India had thought that it and China would continue to be an exception to the rule of Kautilya Behind them there lay some three thousand years of friendship In the past few centuries, however, this friendship had remained dormant Independent India did everything in its power to resurrect it in Koumintang as well as in Communist times And, to start with, China seemed to reciprocate these sentiments

Yet, before long as if confirming Kautilya's definition of an enemy, the relations between India and China began to sour and, when China invaded India in 1962, they curdled into enmity Then Jawaharlal Nehru said, with a courage and candour of which few politicians are capable, 'We have been living in a fool's paradise of our own making ' Then we realised that non-alignment alone would not save us from hostile attention

We have to thank not only China but equally, if not more, the Western Powers and, particularly the USA, for opening our eyes Their consistently unsympathetic, not to say unfriendly, attitude in matters which affected India's integrity such as Kashmir, Goa and above all Bangladesh showed that if a country was not strong it would be used as a pawn in the game of power politics

Today, our policy may be described in Lord Wellington's famous motto, with the change of one word, 'Trust in non-alignment but keep the powder dry.'

(*Mathrubhumi Annual,* 1978)

31. Non-alignment, Then and Now

Perhaps the earliest exposition of India's foreign policy is contained in Jawaharlal Nehru's broadcast on the 7th September 1946, only six days after he formed the Interim National Government Nehru said

We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale The world, in spite of its rivalries and hatreds and inner conflicts, moves inevitably towards closer cooperation and the building up of a world commonwealth It is for this One World that free India will work We send our greetings to the people of the United States of America to whom destiny has given a major role in international affairs To that other great nation of the modern world, the Soviet Union, which also carries a vast responsibility for shaping world events, we send greetings.

This broadcast showed not only how Nehru conceived the policy of non-alignment, but why His main concern was the preservation of world peace

The hopes, entertained during the Second World War, that one world would emerge out of it, had receded Instead, there arose two politico-military blocs at seemingly irreconcilable enmity with each other, headed by the USA and the USSR The great danger was that these two blocs might clash, dragging the rest of the world into a nuclear war and total destruction

There are some critics who think that Nehru's concern for world peace was exaggerated But they do not realise how close mankind was to a world war in the fifties on more than one occasion For instance, in 1950, during the Korean war, when General MacArthur unauthorisedly crossed the 38th Parallel into North Korea and carried the war right up to the Chinese frontier, and China intervened and started mowing down American troops, there was a cry in the USA for pre-emptive use of the atom bomb against China. Then, prodded

by Nehru, Prime Minister Attlee flew to the USA to dissuade President Truman from taking any such disastrous step

It might be argued that it would have been a good thing if China had been taught a lesson before it had developed the atom bomb But at that time, China and the USSR were bound by a fraternal alliance and if China became the victim of an atomic attack, it would have been impossible for the USSR to keep aloof In other words, it would have meant the third world war and the destruction of civilisation

Apart from his concern for world peace, there were doubtless other factors which impelled Nehru to adopt a policy of non-alignment Geographically India was too big, and historically too great, to be the hanger-on of any other state, however powerful Economically it would have been foolish on the part of India, which had in view a gigantic policy of national reconstruction, to put all the eggs in the same basket Philosophically India had, from time immemorial, extended its tolerance to rival sects, rival creeds and rival religions 'There was no cold war', said Nehru, 'in Asoka's heart'

The connection between India's internal policy and external policy was explained to me, soon after I was designated as India's first Ambassador to China, in a letter from Nehru written on the 2nd January, 1947, eight months before India became formally independent 'Our foreign policy', Nehru wrote, 'will ultimately be governed by our internal policy That policy is far from being communistic and is certainly opposed to the Communist Party in India Nevertheless, there is a great and growing feeling in India in favour of some kind of a vague socialist order of society There is much goodwill for America and expectation of help from her in many fields, especially technical There is also a great deal of sympathy for the work of the Soviet Union and the remarkable change that this has brought about among the people The Soviet Union being our neighbour, we shall inevitably develop closer relations with it We cannot afford to antagonise Russia merely because we think this may irritate someone else Nor indeed can we antagonise the USA'

If, in spite of Nehru's hopes, India did antagonise the USA the blame must rest squarely on the United States Government and, in particular, on John Foster Dulles President Eisenhower had the sagacity to recognise that the policy of non-alignment was one which the USA itself had followed for a hundred years and that it did not mean that a non-aligned country was indifferent to right and wrong This observation caused a stir in the diplomatic dovecotes of Pakistan, Thailand and other allies of the USA, and the next day John Foster

Dulles denounced the policy of neutrality as 'short-sighted and immoral' The reason was that Dulles was engaged in a 'global crusade against global communism' and in devising such military pacts as NATO, SEATO and CENTO, for which he was determined to win adherents by hook or by crook

Today, instead of a global crusade, there is a global rapprochement between the great capitalist and communist Powers Jawaharlal Nehru foresaw that the crusade against communism would go the way of similar crusades in the past Our policy of non-alignment was a factor which contributed to the alleviation of tensions between the rival blocs and the gradual demise of the cold war It is a matter for satisfaction that one Great Power, at any rate, the USSR, has, for the last twenty years, understood, appreciated and even underwritten our policy of non-alignment

Today the world is different from what it was in the first decade of India's independence No longer is the world divided into two politico-military blocs 'The monolithic unity of the Communist world', which was the motto in Stalin's time, has become a mockery The military pacts, dear to Dulles's heart, are all in disarray It may, therefore, be asked whether the policy of non-alignment has any further validity

The answer depends on the meaning of the concept of non-alignment Basically it means the determination of a country to ask itself not who is right, but what is right All states would like to put this question to themselves, but not all are in a position to do so Aligned States, whatever the differences between them, have to stand together, generally to vote together and in the last resort to fight together That is why the recent world-wide alert of American forces during the Middle East crisis caused so much consternation in the ranks of America's allies Some British MPs have even called upon America to amend its constitution so as to make it impossible for a megalomaniac President to land the world in war

The concept of non-alignment has been steadily gaining ground The first Non-aligned Conference in Belgrade in 1961 was attended by 25 members the latest at Algiers in 1973 by 80 members, most of whom were heads of state or government

The scope of non-alignment, too, has steadily grown The first Non-aligned Conference in Belgrade drew attention to the dangers of a world war and made a general appeal to both the USA and the USSR to refrain from resuming nuclear tests The second Conference at Cairo in 1964 enunciated the principles of peaceful coexistence and recommended them for adoption at the 20th anniversary of the United

Nations The third Conference at Lusaka drew attention to the tensions caused by the disparities between the haves and the have-nots and their repercussions on the prospects of peace The latest Non-aligned Conference recognised the factors working in favour of peace, such as the peace settlement in Vietnam, the holding of a Collective Security Conference in Europe and the *rapprochement* between the Great Powers At the same time it drew attention to the survival of colonialism and racialism in places like South Africa and Rhodesia and the orgy of repression in Mozambique and Angola, which would not have continued, except with the support of Portugal's imperialist allies

At Algiers Mrs Indira Gandhi laid stress on the value of non-alignment in countering the resistance of vested interests to the progress of developing countries 'As the economic struggle becomes more defined', said Mrs Indira Gandhi, 'the long suppressed voice of the people sharpens, but with every step forward, the resistance of entrenched groups, often allied with foreign interests, especially the faceless multi-national corporations, becomes more vehement and, at the same time, more subtle and insidious, for it is no longer overt but indirectly subversive and provocative ' As long as these forces are active, the policy of non-alignment will have a positive role to play The more the non-aligned states stand together, the more effective their role will be They cannot be, nor do they wish to be, a 'third force', but the so-called 'third world' can be an increasingly mellowing factor in international affairs

(*Round Table*, 1974.)

32. Independence and Interdependence

If I were asked what was the proudest moment in my life, I would say 8 a m on the 15th August 1947 Then, as India's first Ambassador to China, I unfurled the flag of independent India over our embassy in Nanking There was a large and distinguished gathering, including all the heads of diplomatic missions and many Chinese personages, civil and military

The emotion which I experienced then was thus expressed by me in the course of my speech

This is a historic moment in India's destiny I also venture to think that this moment is not without significance in the history of Asia and the world. Today India enters the world stage as an independent State But she is by no means a coy debutante She has been on the stage many times before in the long drama of mankind For centuries she occupied the centre of the stage, holding the torch of Truth and Freedom in her hands and freely passing it on to other lands, far and near. Occasionally she was thrust into the background by those winds of fortune which have swept over our Asian lands from time to time But today she is back on the stage again—this 'lady with a past', as Jawaharlal Nehru affectionately called her—a little sadder perhaps, but a great deal wiser as a result of her experiences, holding again in her hands the torch of Freedom, which was lit by none other than Mahatma Gandhi And her children are determined that this torch shall never, never, never, again be blown out

On that day, millions of Indians in and outside India must have experienced a similar feeling of elation In the following two decades, millions, nay, billions of people in Asia and Africa felt a similar emotion, for one Afro-Asian country after another became independent To begin with, there were only 10 Asian and African members in the UN out of 52; now there are 103 out of 138.

This numerical transformation of the UN has raised some grave problems. On the one hand the USA has denounced what its

Representative in the UN called 'the tyranny of the majority' and even threatened to stop its grant to the UN and its subsidiary agencies if 'the mechanical, monotonous majority' continued to indulge in 'bloc-voting' On the other hand, most Asian, African and Latin American members feel that the resentment of the USA is due to the fact that it can no longer have its way in the UN, as it could in the early days when, with the votes of the 20 Latin American members and also of the Western Powers at its disposal, it easily commanded a majority in the General Assembly Here, clearly, is a problem for major adjustment on the part of all concerned

There was one statesman who, even at the moment of India's independence of which he was one of the great architects, was convinced of the need for interdependence among nations That was Jawaharlal Nehru

Emphasis on one world was all the more impressive, because at that time the world, which had assumed a temporary oneness in the war against Nazism and Fascism, was again splitting up into two worlds, headed by the USA and the USSR Between them there ensued a relentless cold war, which turned into a hot war at the peripheries Nehru was determined to keep India aloof from the war, cold or hot He also did everything in his power to alleviate international tensions and even to terminate conflicts as in Korea Thus, Nehru's independent policy of nonalignment was motivated by his keen sense of the interdependence of nations

Today, no nation is, in a real sense, independent This might seem a sweeping statement to make—sweeping and irreverent, for isn't independence the birthright of every nation?

But what is a nation? If in my childhood—and that was more than seventy years ago, for I was born in the last century—I had been asked what my nationality was I would probably have replied that I was a Travancorean Legally I was not a British subject—of course such a thing as an Indian subject did not exist I was 'a British protected subject' I was different from my wife, or, rather, the girl who was to be my wife, for she belonged to British Malabar and was a British subject proper I, unlike her, had my own Maharaja, to whom we owed allegiance, and my own national anthem, Vanchibhoomi Pathe Chiram, i e , long live the Lord of Vanchi (Kerala), and not God Save the King, (To say Vande Mataram would have been to court arrest for sedition) We Travancoreans had our own coinage, we had our own Travancore rupee and not the Sircar rupee, and our own chakrams and kashu instead of annas and pies We had our own customs and our own inter-

nal post offices called Anchal and not Tapal We, Nairs, had our own social system, too We still followed the matriarchal system which the rest of India—and the world—had given up centuries ago

Now, all that has changed Travancore, as a political entity, has gone with the wind So have Vanchibhoomi Pathe Chiram chakrams, and kashu, the Anchal office and the matriarchal system The steam-roller of Time, equipped with railways and aeroplanes and that magic word, democracy, has pushed them all into the limbo of the past Now, Delhi is within four hours' reach from Trivandrum, instead of four days in pre-independence days and some 400 days in the time of Sri Sankaracharlar

What has happened to Kerala—and India—is happening to the world The barriers of communication are being removed and distances are being annihilated Today we are all in the same boat Rock the boat, and all mankind will feel its tremors An Archduke is murdered in Serbia and the world is plunged into a war A new type of war, the First World War A megalomaniac is at large in Germany and he sets the world aflame in the Second World War A nuclear bomb may be dropped by accident or design, and that will land us in the third world war The third world war, however, will, in all probability, be the last to be waged by civilised man When Einstein was asked what weapons man would employ in the next war, he said 'I do not know about the next war, but in the next war but one he would be fighting with bows and arrows'

In June 1975, on the 30th anniversary of the United Nations, Mr Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, uttered a clear warning regarding the perilous position of mankind today He regretted that neither the conventional nor the nuclear arms race had been halted The world would not be safe, he said, as long as the global military expenditure came to 300 billion dollars a year and the annual arms sales came to 20 billion dollars 'Never before in peacetime,' he said, 'has the world witnessed such a great flow of weapons of war' This posed a great danger not only to the countries concerned but to the peace and security of the whole world, for 'it can involve the great powers and trigger off nuclear confrontation and even war' Truly, the choice today is between coexistence and coextinction

If the hope of man's survival lies in interdependence, so does the poor man's hope of attaining prosperity, or, at any rate, of shedding poverty So, strangely enough, does the rich man's chance of escaping suffocation in a sea of affluence

This has been acknowledged by the holding of a number of world

conferences in recent months—a World Food Conference, a World Pollution Conference, a World Population Conference and a World Economic Conference where a new Economic Charter was framed Particularly significant was a Conference at Cocoyos, Mexico, of 32 eminent social scientists, attended by UN officials The Conference adopted an impressive declaration, analysing the predicament of man today and indicating the remedy According to them, the main trouble is that the world has not emerged from the historical consequences of five centuries of colonialism Three-fourths of the world's income is in the hands of one-fourth of its people The richest five per cent engross most of the grain while the poorest twenty per cent are getting still poorer This was bad for the rich, too, for super-consumption endangers the consumer's health It has been calculated that after the year 1967, the consumption of grain in North America has grown per capita by 350 pounds This increase alone is equal to an Indian's total annual consumption, and a small release from the surplus of the rich is enough to meet the entire Asian shortfall It has been said that if an average American forgoes one hamburger a week it would mean a saving of 10 million tons of grain, which is enough to cover the entire deficit of India's food requirements

The Conference at Cocoyos has clearly defined what should be the proper objective of economic development Its principal concern should be to satisfy the basic needs of all sections of society in respect of food, shelter, clothing, health and education Economic growth which benefits only the wealthiest minority and maintains or even increases the disparities between and within countries is not development 'The basic purpose of development should be not to develop things but to develop man'

In order to make progress towards this goal fundamental economic, social and political changes will have to be effected This, the Conference at Cocoyos realises, will be resisted by 'the international power structure' It has enumerated the methods to which this power structure will resort in order to maintain the existing systems, namely, 'economic manipulation, withdrawal of credits, imposition of embargos, subversive use of intelligence agencies, repression, counter-insurgency measures and full-scale intervention' Yet how little all this counts ultimately against the spirit of man was shown in Vietnam.

The recent oil crisis, too, has served a useful purpose The producers, the principal consumers of oil and the minor consumers in the third world, whose hardships are far more intolerable, have learned a lesson in the interdependence of nations Or so one hopes

No nation is independent today in the sense that it can go its way in total disregard of the interests and sentiments of its neighbours And today every nation is every other nation's neighbour

(*The Statesman*, 1975)

33. East Wind, West Wind

'The East Wind has prevailed over the West Wind ' So said Chairman Mao Tse-tung in 1957 when China and the USSR were still, to all appearances, the fastest of friends What better proof of Mao's dictum could there be than the launching of the first sputnik by the USSR a few days earlier? That was a landmark in human history, but to Mao it had a special significance It meant that the Soviet Union and therefore the Communist world had the ultimate weapon, the intercontinental ballistic missile It assured the ultimate victory of Communism, the ultimate hegemony of China

Western historians, too, have sometimes treated all history as a conflict between the East and the West A few years ago, Arnold Toynbee, the great historian, delivered a set of lectures called 'The World and the West' For a few centuries before and after the birth of Christ, Rome dominated the world Then came the Arab resurgence when the Arabs, under the fiery banner of Islam, marched to the West as well as to the East, and even Spain came under their sway Europe rebelled against it, and there followed the Crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which checked the tide of Arab expansionism In the sixteenth century, however, Europe was again menaced from the East, this time by Turkey which dominated large parts of eastern and central Europe for three centuries The power of Turkey was broken at Vienna in 1764 Thereafter, for a couple of centuries, Western Europe, fortified by the Industrial Revolution and led by Great Britain, dominated all Asia and Africa And now we see the revulsion of Asia and Africa against Europe and America, the revulsion of the East, including Russia, against the West

This in brief is the gist of Toynbee's historical Survey He, too, believes, that the east wind is now blowing strongly

This was not Jawaharlal Nehru's way of looking at things As a student of history, he knew that from time immemorial there had been conflicts among men and nations But he felt that an era of international cooperation instead of unending conflict was coming or, at any rate, must come In this respect, he was anxious that India should set the example

In 1947, the conflict between India and Great Britain ended in the independence of India Nehru's conception of independence was absolute In moving the Resolution on Independence at the Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress in 1927, he said

'The resolution means what it says It means complete independence It means control over the defence forces of the country It means control over the economic policy of the country It means control over relations with foreign countries Whether we achieve it today or tomorrow, a year hence, or ten years hence I cannot say That depends on your strength and the strength of the country'

No one fought more valiantly for independence than Jawaharlal Nehru Yet having won independence, he let India remain as a member of the Commonwealth Even the epithet, British, was dropped, it became just the Commonwealth of Nations In and through this Commonwealth, India acted as a channel for the east wind to blow to the West and for the west wind to the East In Nehru's time India played this part so effectively that in the USA there was a gibe, 'Eisenhower follows MacMillan, MacMillan follows Nehru, Nehru follows Chou En-lai, and therefore Eisenhower follows Chou En-lai' No wonder that the John Birch Society, an extreme rightist organisation, regarded Eisenhower as a Communist!

It was not Nehru alone who, during the Second World War, entertained hopes of one world Wendell Wilkie wrote a book with *One World* title When the Second World War ended, however, it was not one world that emerged but two worlds—two politic—military blocs, headed by the USA and the USSR respectively Instinctively Jawaharlal Nehru knew that this spelt disaster At his first Press Conference which was held only four days after he formed the interim National Government on the 2nd September, 1946, he expressed his apprehensions and his determination to keep India away from all military blocs Thus was proclaimed the policy of non-alignment under which many a newly-independent state in Asia and Africa was to take shelter from the strains and stresses of the cold war

It was natural for Jawaharlal Nehru not to view the West with jaundiced eyes because he had been greatly influenced by Western civilisation Brought up in a highly aristocratic Indian home, with Western governesses and other Western fittings, and educated at school and college in England, he was as much a product of the West as of the East In a moment of introspection he described himself as one who was 'out of place everywhere, at home nowhere', In reality, he was at

home everywhere, out of place nowhere With all his Western upbringing he let India enter into every fibre of his being One has only to think of his epic invocation to the Ganga in his last will and testament in order to realise how great was his attachment to his Indian heritage, even though he strove hard for the removal of the evils that had crept into it

In England, Nehru came under the influence of liberalism, then fashionable, and that vague socialism which was being aired by Bernard Shaw, Sydney and Beatrice Webb On his return to India, became under the spell of Gandhiji though he never became a slave to it During his visit to Moscow in 1927, he saw new horizons 'My outlook became wider', he wrote, 'and nationalism by itself seemed to me a narrow and insufficient creed Political freedom, independence, were no doubt essential, but they were steps only in the right direction, without social freedom and a socialistic structure of society and the state, neither the country nor the individual could develop much' And so when he had the power, he led his country gradually on to the goal of a socialistic pattern of society He sought to establish socialism through the Parliamentary system, to reconcile political and economic democracy and thus to effect a synthesis between the East and the West

In India, ever since independence, both the East Wind and the West Wind have been blowing They can continue to blow, provided they do not assume the velocity of storms There have been occasions when an East Wind and a West Wind seemed to join forces in an effort to blow out the lamp of freedom For instance, in Angola, the USA and China backed the FPLA which was supported by South Africa and led by a man who, it was revealed, had been in the pay of the CIA for 14 years, against the MPLA, a patriotic organisation which, ever since 1956, had, with the support of the Soviet Union, been struggling against Portuguese colonialism Strange, indeed, are the currents and cross-currents in a world which is still dominated by power politics

India's own attitude towards such contrary winds was beautifully expressed by Mahatma Gandhi 'I do not want', said Gandhiji, 'my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them Mine is not a religion of the prison house It has room for the least among God's creations, but it is proof against insolent pride of race, religion or colour'

(*Mathrubhumi Annual*, 1977)

34. The Eternal Triangle: India, Russia and China

A favourite theme in modern fiction is the eternal triangle, formed by the husband, the wife and the friend. Sometimes the relations between the three sides are salutary, sometimes comic, tragic or tragi-comic.

There can be a similar triangle in relations between nations too

Anyone who looks at the map of the world will see that Eurasia is dominated by a land mass, bounded by the Arctic, the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, and an inchoate line running eastwards from the Roof of the World towards the Caspian and the Black Sea and then northwards across the heart of Europe beyond the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea to the Arctic Here is an eternal triangle formed by India, Russia and China.

I felt the almost physical impact of this triangle on the 15th September 1944, when I stood on the Mintaka Pass, 16,000 feet high, separating India from China and Russia. Fifty years before me, there stood on the same spot another traveller, Major Knight He too felt the impact of the Triangle and wrote a book called *Where three Empires Meet* By 1944, two of these empires had become republics and the third would soon follow suit.

To strain the metaphor, this eternal triangle, which has always been there in a physical sense, was, in 1944, in the process of formation in a political sense.

Officially the two sides which were the first to come together were India and China Under the exigencies of the Second World War, India, though still a dependency of Great Britain and therefore incompetent to establish diplomatic relations, established semi-diplomatic relations with China and appointed a Representative in Chungking, the war-time capital of China My first trip as Agent-General to China in 1943 took 11 hours by air from Calcutta to Chungking, my second trip overland from Srinagar via Kashgar in 1944 took 125 days. It was in the course of this trip that I crossed the Mintaka Pass The emotion that I felt then is described in my diary dated the 15th

September 1944, thus 'when I stood at the Great Divide with one foot in India and the other in China a wave of thankfulness surged up in my heart that I should have been chosen to represent my country in another, as great and ancient as mine, and to do what little I could to cement the friendship between them '* I then did not suspect that in less than a decade it would fall to my lot to represent my country as a full-fledged Ambassador in another great country, Russia, for a period of nine years and to promote the friendship with that country too.

How different was the state of India, China and Russia in 1944 as compared with today! Mahatma Gandhi had just flung his last great challenge to Britain by launching the Quit India movement with the cry of 'Karenge ya marenge' (Do or Die) Britain resolutely took up the challenge The movement was scotched, but not killed, and Mahatma Gandhi and all his colleagues, including Jawaharlal Nehru, were arrested and imprisoned

In 1944 India was one In three years India became two and, a quarter of a century later, three The territory through which I passed was entirely inhabited by Muslims, and yet the propaganda for the creation of Pakistan had left them absolutely untouched The following passage from my diary, dated the 18th September 1944, makes sad reading today 'Escorted by Chinese sepoys, Turki orderlies, Tajik lambardars, Kirghiz attendants and Hunza servants, I, a solitary Hindu among two dozen Muslims, am moving up Sarikol But the fact that I am a Hindu does not count, it did not count for one minute in any part of those cent per cent Muslim areas which I passed through since leaving Srinagar All that counts is that I am an Indian and the representative of the Government of India'

If India in 1944 was very different from present-day India so was China from present-day China As the head of the Government of China was President Chiang Kai-shek who was regarded, especially in the USA, as a pillar of the free world — a pillar not only against fascism but against communism The only fly in the ointment was the existence of a militant Communist Party in the north-west corner of China under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung In 1944 it was no more than a flyspeck, at worst, a wasp No one thought that in five years it would show itself as an eagle and drive out the Kuomintang and sit on the imperial throne as firmly as any Son of Heaven had ever done.

If, in 1944, China was being thrust upon with greatness, the Soviet

* Reproduced in my book *Delhi-Chungking*

Union had achieved greatness, especially by its part in the Second World War It was the first to break, at Stalingrad, the myth of the invincibility of Hitler The Soviet Union was forging its way not merely to the position of a Great Power but of one of the two greatest Powers in the world

Such was the state of the three sides of the eternal triangle in 1944 As already said, politically the triangle was in the process of formation For this the omens were propitious Rooted in the consciousness of both countries were the memories of the friendship which flourished between India and China in the early centuries of the Christian era Then hardy Indian and Chinese pilgrims went across the most formidable mountain-trail in the world with the torch of Buddhism in their hands The memory of this period, which had lain dormant for more than a thousand years, now began to spring into life At a banquet given to me by the Governor of Sinkiang, Wu Chung-hsin, in Urumchi, he said 'In 643 our great pilgrim, Hsuan Tsang, went to India in search of the Buddhist scriptures Now, in Mr Menon's person, India has repaid to China the compliment which China paid to India thirteen hundred years ago'

Jawaharlal Nehru was anxious that the advent of communism in China should not be allowed to impair the age-old, and newly resurrected, friendship between the two countries For a time this hope seemed to materialise and its echoes were heard in the resounding cry of 'Hindi Cheeni bhai bhai' when Chou En-lai came to India How and why this hope has receded is a subject which lies outside the scope of this article

In 1944 the Sino-Soviet side of the triangle was being cemented by the common struggle against fascism and nazism, and even more by the struggle which they knew lay ahead against another determined enemy, Japan And when the communists established their sway over China, the fraternal friendship between the two communist giants seemed, to all appearances, to have become an invincible feature of the international landscape How deceptive appearances have turned out to be, and how the friendship between the two countries has curdled into enmity, is, again, a subject which lies outside the purview of this article

The Indo-Soviet side of the triangle was somewhat slow in taking diplomatic shape, as compared with the other two sides, largely because of Britain's rooted suspicion of Russia By 1944 British India had already established semi-diplomatic relations with China, but not with the USSR Lord Wavell's memoirs, recently published, have

revealed the fact that even before India became independent, the Soviet Government had informally expressed a desire to exchange diplomatic representatives with India, and that he had proposed my name as India's Representative to the Soviet Union at a meeting of the Viceroy's Council The Muslim League, however, opposed this move, and it was not pursued.

Whatever might have been the attitude of the Government of India, there was a long history of friendship between India and Russia It goes back to the visit of Afnasi Nikitin who came to India a quarter of a century before Vasco da Gama; spent three years mostly in the kingdoms of Golkonda and Bijapur, and has left a fascinating and sympathetic account of the customs and manners and politics of that period In the 16th and 17th centuries colonies of Indians were settled on the ports of the Volga River; and Peter the Great issued special decrees for their protection As a token of appreciation, Emperor Aurangzeb sent him an elephant all the way to St Petersburg—a precedent which was followed by Jawaharlal Nehru who, after his visit to the Soviet Union in 1955, sent two baby elephants, Ravi and Shashi, as a present to the children of Russia. In the 18th century, much of the trade from India across Persia to Azerbaijan and beyond was in the hands of Indian traders In Astrakhan, at the mouth of the Volga river on the Caspian Sea, there used to be a street called the Indian street, and in Baku I saw a temple-cum-caravanserai built by Indian traders

All this intercourse between India and Russia stopped abruptly with the establishment of British rule in India In the 19th century the Russian bogey was one of the cardinal principles of British foreign policy. When that bogeyman put on the red cloak of Bolshevism he looked all the more terrible Britain established what may truly be called an iron curtain between India and Russia

Yet, across the curtain, came ideas The Revolution in Russia, said the Montague-Chelmsford reforms, was 'regarded in India as a triumph over despotism . .It has given an impetus to Indian political aspirations' That was the time when the principle of self-determination was proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson, but its application was practically confined to Europe Vladmir Ilyich Lenin, on the contrary, not only proclaimed the doctrine of self-determination in one of the earliest decrees issued by him, but promptly applied it to such countries as Poland and Finland by releasing them from the clutches of Russia The Soviet Union also renounced 'the unequal treaties' which, in common with other European powers, Tsarist

Russia had compelled China to sign 'The only true devotees of the principle of self-determination', wrote Bal Gangadhar Tilak in *Kesari* in 1920, 'are the Bolsheviks' No wonder that it was Britain's policy to keep India and Russia at arm's length from each other

Briefly, to revert to the metaphor of the eternal triangle, the present position is that the Indo-Soviet side of the triangle has been firmly established, but the other two sides, the Sino-Soviet side and the Sino-Indian side, have been rudely shaken Yet, the triangle exists as an unalterable geo-political fact There are some interests which would prevent the three sides of the triangle from getting together again, but it should be the objective of all men of goodwill to restore it to its normal shape, for that would help to promote the stability of Asia and the peace of the world

[*The Statesman* (abridged)]

35 Sino-Indian Relations

It is twenty-seven years since India became independent This period falls into two more or less equal halves from the standpoint of India's relations with China During the first half the friendship between India and China rose impressively to the heights of the Panch Sheel, jointly proclaimed by them in 1954 In the sixties the reverse was the case Sino-Indian friendship began to deteriorate and, with the Chinese invasion of India in the autumn of 1962, curdled into enmity

On the attainment of independence, the prospects of our friendship with China seemed distinctly hopeful Both history and geography were in its favour Behind us lay some 3,000 years of uninterrupted friendship, though the friendship was more often dormant than active The mighty Himalayas precluded military adventure In Sino-Indian history, the Himalayan Passes merely provided a hazardous route for hardy pilgrims to go to and fro

During the war, despite the fact that India was not independent, the Government of India established diplomatic, or semi-diplomatic, relations with China and sent an Agent-General to Chungking At the end of the war, the post was upgraded to that of Ambassador While presenting my credentials as India's first Ambassador to President Chiang Kai-shek, I expressed the hope that the old, and now resurrected, friendship between India and China would conduce to the stability of Asia and the peace of the world

Those were not idle sentiments The people of both countries genuinely felt that the continuance of their age-old friendship would be a stabilising and civilising influence in international relations Two years after India had attained independence, the Communists came to power in China India was determined that this development should not affect our mutual friendship India, together with the United Kingdom, was the first to recognise the new Government Unlike the United Kingdom, India sponsored, year after year, China's membership of the United Nations At Bandung, Nehru presented Chou En-lai as the great representative of a great State—a part which Chou played to perfection India also evolved, at the United

Nations, a formula which ended the three-year-old war in Korea and thus saved thousands of Chinese as well as American lives The Government of India relinquished the special rights which it had enjoyed in Tibet, and in an agreement regulating the relations with Tibet, India and China proclaimed the famous Panch Sheel Thus, in the fifties, the friendship between India and China seemed constant as the Northern Star

Even during this period, there were rumblings of future trouble Chairman Mao Tse-tung had declared that 'neutrality is a camouflage, a third road does not exist', and the Chinese press had even called Nehru 'a running-dog of British imperialism' In our anxiety to maintain our ancient friendship with China, despite the advent of a new and ruthless Government, we ignored such statements as the ebullitions of a sorely harassed people, intoxicated with success, in the first flush of their revolutionary enthusiasm

A more serious incident was the 'liberation' of Tibet in 1950 Tibet, however, had never been recognised as a sovereign State, even Great Britain, which erected Tibet into a buffer State between India and China, did not deny China's suzerainty over Tibet In 1950, India expressed its concern for Tibetan autonomy and was assured, in the blandest terms, by Chou En-lai that the Chinese Government had no intention to tamper with the social, cultural or political institutions in Tibet On 24 August 1950, India also warned Peking that 'the recognised boundary between India and Tibet should remain inviolate' It repeatedly drew the Chinese Government's attention to the errors in its maps in delineating the Sino-Indian boundary To this too, the Chinese Government gave the soothing reply that these maps were old and that they could be easily rectified when the Chinese Government was less pre-occupied At that time, we little suspected that the rectification would take the form of a massive invasion of Indian territory!

Even in the days of 'Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai', China, it now appears, had had some mental reservations For instance, it declined to recognise our position i Kashor, unlike the Soviet Union, which recognised it readily and supported it ungrudgingly Perhaps, China, sensing that India was the only stumbling-block in its march towards hegemony in Asia, was already viewing Pakistan as a pawn in its game of power politics The relations between China and Pakistan have since grown into what Jawaharlal Nehru called 'an alliance of animus' against India In the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971, China gave full moral, diplomatic and, to some extent, material

support to Pakistan though Chinese support never took so crude and blatant a form as the provocative entry of the American Seventh Fleet into the Indian Ocean at the height of the Bangladesh crisis

The present state of the relations between India and China can be described as an uneasy stalemate, occasionally broken by a shrill blast such as the one which China recently let off when India established closer association with Sikkim

It must be admitted that, during the late fifties, when China was beginning to appear more and more in its true colours, and its nibblings on our frontier were becoming more and more frequent, India's policy towards China was marked by a certain naivete. We thought that if we were good to others, others would be good to us, or at least leave us alone We thought that non-alignment by itself would act as a bar to aggression In thinking so, we were, as Nehru said at the height of the Chinese invasion, 'living in a fool's paradise of our own making'—a paradise in which there might be hornets but no dragons That is why we failed to take effective steps either to defend our frontier or to come to a settlement with China

For this, the responsibility must rest not merely on the Government but also—perhaps even more—on public opinion, as it showed itself in certain sections of the Press and Parliament The vociferous critics of our China policy were equally vociferous a few years previously against what they regarded as the extravagance of our defence expenditure

It is, of course, essential for Government to keep Parliament in touch with the broad lines of its foreign policy, but for the Government to conduct its foreign policy through Parliament is to invite confusion and to deny itself any room for manoeuvring After all, negotiation means the art of give-and-take It serves no useful purpose simply to strike martial attitudes, cry hoarse against giving up a single inch of territory and demand that the Chinese intruders shall be pushed out at once In making such demands, some at least of the Government's critics seemed to have been actuated not so much by their perfervid patriotism, as by an unholy glee over the predicament in which Nehru, whose socialistic policies they disliked, found himself vis-a-vis China

Are we to reconcile ourselves to the prospect of eternal enmity with China? After all, China itself may change, as the Soviet Union has done, moving with the times As a cynic put it, no nation has permanent friends or permanent enemies, it has only permanent interests Let us make up our minds as to what our vital interests are on the frontier and then proceed to assert them at the conference table as

firmly as we can At the same time, let us not harbour any illusions In the distant past India and China were collaborators in spreading the light of religion and culture in Asia, we are now rivals in upholding our distinctive ways of life Let us try to turn this rivalry, despite China's present mood, into a channel for healthy competition and not unending antagonism, by eliminating avoidable sources of friction and seeking, through negotiation, the mutual recognition of our vital interests In this way, let us re-establish our friendship with China, not on the previous, nebulous, emotional level, but on a realistic, self-respecting basis This will be the main task and, indeed, the acid test of Indian diplomacy in the coming years

(*Swarajya*, 1975)

36. New Europe and Old Asia

Europe today is different from what it was in the last decade Indeed it promises to be different from what is has been for the last five hundred years

The net political result of the Renaissance and the Reformation in the 15th and 16th centuries was the destruction of the unity of Christendom For a thousand years Europe had enjoyed some kind of unity under the Christianity of Rome With the Reformation this unity became a thing of the past Europe became an amalgam of nation-states warring with one another and causing two world wars in the 20th century

Ever since the schism between the Church in Rome and Byzantium, Russia, which had adopted the Eastern form of Christianity, had been going its own way A new and powerful ideological twist was given to the rift between Western and Eastern Europe by the Great October Revolution of 1917 And after the Second World War, Europe came to be divided into two camps, the Western and the Eastern, the Western taking refuge under NATO and the Eastern under the Warsaw Pact

The very conception of Europe as an entity suffered an eclipse, as shown by the very term, European Defence Community (EDC) It can be said that just as the Holy Roman Empire was neither Holy nor Roman nor an Empire, so the EDC was neither European, nor Defensive nor a Community It was not European because it represented only half of Europe It was more than defensive, for one of its aims was the 'liberation' of Eastern Europe And it was not a Community because the old national jealousies and fears in Western Europe continued to flourish

Overriding them all was the ideological and political antipathy between the East and the West which expressed itself in an intense cold war There was a fear that the cold war might turn into a hot war, causing still another world war to break out in Europe Such a war, fought with nuclear weapons, might have brought about the end of civilisation

That fear has now receded President Nixon and Mr Brezhnev have reached an agreement to exclude nuclear war not only between the USA and the USSR but between either of them and other countries A number of steps have been taken to avert conventional war as well

A Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (ESCE) has just completed its session in Helsinki It was attended by 35 countries including the USA and Canada and has been hailed as the biggest diplomatic event since the Congress of Vienna in 1811 For more than a decade, the Soviet Union had been advocating the holding of a European Security Conference, but it met with a cold, if not hostile, reception in Western Europe and the USA It was suspected to be a ruse on the part of the Soviet Union to obtain recognition of the *status quo* in Europe and of the new international frontiers which had sprung up as a result of the Second World War But, largely as a result of the initiative of Mr Brandt who has deservedly been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace and the agreements between the Federal German Republic on the one hand and the USSR and Poland on the other, these frontiers have now been recognised, and the proposed admission of both Germanys to the UN would clinch the matter

The Western states represented at Helsinki were anxious to obtain an adequate *quid pro quo* in the form of freer contacts and unrestricted exchange of information between the East and the West On the Communist side there was a suspicion that the demand for such exchange is a device for trying to undermine the Communist system and therefore they are not prepared to permit it beyond a certain limit

It is too much to hope that the European Security Conference will eliminate the five-hundred-year-old rivalries in Europe or the fifty-year-old antipathies between the East and West Nevertheless Helsinki was a concrete gesture towards a detente between Eastern and Western Europe, the first step towards the fulfilment of President de Gaulle's vision, which he cherished even when the Cold War was rife, of a 'Europe stretching from the Urals to the Atlantic'

Compared to Europe it must be admitted that Asia today is in a bad way Asia has never enjoyed the kind of unity which Christendom had in the Middle Ages During the last four hundred years, however, Asia had a kind of negative unity in that all Asia was under Western dominance Even China, which did not formally lose its freedom, had, as Dr Sun Yat-sen said, become a 'hyper-coloney—a coloney of nations'

The end of the Second World War seemed to open a new era in Asia, of which the independence of India was the harbinger All na-

tions in Asia were anxious to prevent a recurrence of colonialism in any form They never had the pretension that they could form a third bloc, for they knew that they did not have the requisite strength, but they were determined to resist the resurgence of imperialist or neo-imperialist machinations and to cooperate with one another as best as they could That was the essence of the Bandung spirit Indeed in the fifties one could have justifiably spoken of a new Asia and an old Europe, for while Europe was in the grip of the Cold War, Asia seemed to be throbbing with a new spirit

Unfortunately, this phase did not last long For this we Asians are ourselves to blame Our bane is lack of unity If the Arab States had not been so hopelessly disunited, they would have been able to stand up more resolutely to tiny Israel, even though Israel is backed by the mightiest state in the world Again, if Pakistan had not succumbed to J F Dulles's pactomania and become a member of CENTO and SEATO and thus obtained several thousand million dollars worth of sophisticated weapons, which it had no compunction in using against India even though they were meant to be used for warding off Communism, the history of this sub-continent during the last two decades would have been different and the peoples of both India and Pakistan would have been happier and more prosperous

The emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign state and the events which led up to it demonstrated the folly of Pakistan's policy and the utility of relying on force and foreign patronage, instead of meeting the sentiments and aspirations of the people One had hoped that Pakistan had learnt a lesson from history, and the Simla Conference roused hopes of an era of peace in this sub-continent That has not materialised

One factor, more than any other, which has militated, and continues to militate, against peace and progress in Asia, whether it be West Asia, South Asia or South-East Asia, is the supply of sophisticated weapons to underdeveloped nations They can ill afford them and, more often than not, they are used by receiving governments to buttress their dictatorial regimes

Dr Linus Pauling, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Science as well as for Peace, has recalled how Mr Henry Kuss Junior, Assistant Secretary of Defence in the United States, had received the United States Department of Defence Meritorious Civilian Service Medal for his imaginative leadership in the military export sales programme He was given this medal because he had succeeded in selling to the developing countries of the world, 1,500 million dollars worth of

sophisticated weapons, jet bombers, tanks, machine-guns, and other equipment, in one year In his speech of acceptance he said that 'with the proper amount of energy, imagination, and vigour, we should by 1971 be selling 15,000 million dollars worth of sophisticated military equipment to the developing countries'

This activity may be profitable, but it is not conducive to world peace If the remarkable series of agreements, recently concluded by world leaders, could be supplemented by another agreement, or at least an understanding, to desist from the indiscriminate supply of sophisticated military equipment to the developing countries, there may be the glimmering of an era of peace in Asia as there already is in Europe Peace, after all, is indivisible, and there cannot be permanent peace in Europe if parts of Asia continue to be in turmoil

(*Indian Express,* 1973.)

37 March to Munich

A few weeks ago we celebrated the 31st anniversary of Indian independence It followed close on the heels of the 36th anniversary of the Quit India movement and the 7th anniversary of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

In a few weeks we shall be celebrating the 109th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth At about the same time falls the 150th anniversary of Leo Tolstoy, whose writings, together with the Gita and the Bible, had a profound influence on Mahatma Gandhi

These were auspicious events But on the last day of September there also falls the 40th anniversary of an event worth remembering, though not celebrating, namely, the infamous Munich Pact, which led directly to the Second World War The march to Munich is vividly described in a book called *The Munich Drama* by Ivan Maisky, who was the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain from 1932 to 1943 He is singularly qualified to describe the events of this period, not only because he was a scholar and literary artist, whose pen could resurrect the events of a dire period in world history in all their nudity

Maisky has given a graphic word-picture of the principal actors in the drama Foremost among them was Neville Chamberlain Nature had given him, says Maisky, a small mind, great energy, and the pigheadedness that stems from a narrow outlook 'Such a mixture', says Maisky, 'is highly dangerous in a man at the helm of state'

Maisky describes Chamberlain thus 'a tall, thin man with a bright patch of silver gray in the black cap of his hair (I do not know whether this was nature or chemistry at work), an uninteresting individual, unsociable, with, no talent for oratory, no sense of humour and none of that personal charm so vital to a politician, he was simply the incarnation of unfitness for work in the sphere of foreign affairs' This impression conformed with Churchill's verdict that 'Chamberlain looked at foreign affairs through the wrong end of a municipal drainpipe'

Maisky's very first interview with Chamberlain showed what kind of man he was He asked Maisky why the USSR had been buying

more goods from Germany than from Great Britain Because, said Maisky, Germany, unlike England, had given the Soviet Union a five-year credit 'Chamberlain's face suddenly changed', says Maisky "He turned round sharply towards me in his armchair and in a spiteful tone said, 'Do you really want us to give long-term credits to our enemy? No, we can put our money to better use" In the same tone as Chamberlain had used Maisky replied 'I want exactly nothing, Mr Chancellor, I have not come to you for credits at all You asked me why the Soviet Union placed orders primarly with Germany I answered you That was all'

Maisky's comment is that he was glad that Chamberlain revealed himself in his true colours He did so again in the course of another interview, when he poohpoohed British diplomacy, as it had been conducted so far, and expressed his determination to change it all He said that he would sit at the table with Hitler and with a pencil in hand go through all his complaints and claims and thus pave the way for reconciliation

Chamberlain began sitting at the table with Hitler's junior partner, Mussolini, and concluded a Treaty of Friendship with him Maisky calls it 'the Chamberlain-Mussolini romance'

This was followed by the visit of Lord Halifax to Berlin in November 1937 There Lord Halifax mooted the possibility of a Four-Power Pact between Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy In doing so, says Maisky, Britain was showing the green light for aggression in Central Europe The fruits of this visit was Germany's annexation of Austria in March 1938, on the ground that all Germans had to be united in the Third Reich

Encouraged by the passivity, if not connivance, of the Western Powers, Hitler now turned his attention to Czechoslovakia On the 30th September 1938, he launched an armed attack on Czechoslovakia, preceded by an uprising, provoked by himself, in Sudetenland where Germans formed the majority of the population Chamberlain then decided to pay a visit to Hitler in the hope, to use Winston Churchill's phrase, that he could ride the tiger In the course of the talks in Berchtesgarden was conceived the Anglo-French plan under which Sudetenland was to be handed over to Germany and a new frontier for Czechoslovakia was to be defined and guaranteed by an international body Czechoslovakia bitterly resented this proposal which meant its dismemberment and invoked its Mutual Defence Pacts with France and the USSR under which these states were bound to go to the help of Czechoslovakia in case of aggression The USSR

categorically expressed its readiness to do so, but France declined

Thereupon Chamberlain paid another visit to Germany and was 'shocked, astounded and frightened' by Hitler's bluster and his threat to unleash the dogs of war Chamberlain returned to England and obtained the approval of the Cabinet to the Anglo-French plan It was then that he uttered the shameful words 'How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing!'

The last scene in the sordid drama was enacted in Munich where a Conference of the four Powers—Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy—was held The participants, wrote Ivan Kirkpatrick in his book *Inner Circle,* were 'a harried lot of men who showed no sign of shame at being parties to the dismemberment of their ally' Hitler, as usual, stormed, shouted and ranted at the British and French representatives and made no attempt to conceal his contempt for them The outcome was that Britain and France decided to shove their Plan down the throat of Czechoslovakia and gave Czechoslovakia a six-hour ultimatum to accept the Plan, failing which Czechoslovakia would have to go it alone Czechoslovakia had no alternative but to accept it and to cede Sudetenland to Germany The only concession which Hitler gave was that he agreed to postpone the date of the annexation of Sudetenland from the 1st to the 10th October 'A world-shattering achievement on the part of Chamberlain!' says Maisky ironically

Chamberlain, however, had to have something up his sleeve to appease British public opinion which was becoming increasingly restive He obtained from Hitler his consent to a Declaration which ran as follows 'We have reached the firm decision that the method of consultation has become the established method for reviewing all other questions which may affect our two countries, and we are fully determined to continue our efforts to eliminate possible sources of disagreement and thus to facilitate the ensurance of peace in Europe' It was this Declaration which Chamberlain dangled at the airport on his return to England, saying that he had ensured 'peace in our time'

As all students of history know, the Declaration proved to be just a scrap of paper which Hitler tore up in less than six months On the 15th March 1939, directly contrary to the Declaration, Hitler launched a blitzkrieg on Czechoslovakia and transformed that hapless state into 'the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the independent state of Slovakia'

Throughout this crisis Maisky proved to be a vigilant observer and

resourceful diplomat He kept in close touch with all parties, and especially with Churchill, who had advocated the despatch of a joint note to Hitler by England, France and the Soviet Union, warning him against further aggression That was the only way of saving peace, but in his blind hatred of the USSR Chamberlain would not adopt it The outcome was the Second World War

Maisky has given an account of his meeting with Masaryk, the Czechoslovakian Ambassador in London, soon after the Munich Pact Masaryk tried to hide his distress by saying 'What fine weather we are having!' 'To hell with the weather', Maisky said, 'I haven't come to you about that I have come to express my deep sympathy and profound indignation at the shameful behaviour of Britain and France at this exceptionally grievous moment for your people' 'A kind of electric shock', says Maisky, 'seemed to galvanise Masaryk's tall figure The ice instantly melted, and he shook off his immobility He swayed and suddenly fell against my breast, sobbing bitterly I was overcome and a little embarrassed Kissing me through his tears, Masaryk muttered 'They have sold me into slavery to the Germans, as they used to sell the Negroes into slavery to America'

Though Chamberlain was the principal culprit in this drama there were others of the same ilk whose animus against the Soviet Union knew no bounds and were prepared to appease Fascism and Nazism, lest Communism should gather strength There was Edouard Daladier, the French Premier, 'who was like a reed painted in simulation of steel In the event of any complications or dangers he usually began with high notes and threatening gestures, but very soon ran out of breath and gradually slid down into a cowardly minor key' There was Bonnet, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'an out and out reactionary and political adventurer' There was Sir Horace Wilson, Chamberlain's confidant, 'a dyed-in-the wool reactionary who considered that the world consisted entirely of fools and scoundrels and that they could be governed only by appealing to their basest instincts' There was Runciman, the head of a British mission to Prague, 'who suffered from deafness and was slow to grasp events Runciman did not like to work, he belonged to that class of British Officials who ruled but did not govern' And there was a figure, well known in India, Lord Halifax, then Lord Irwin, whom we used to call 'the Christian Viceroy' Maisky describes him as "a man of a philosophical-mystical turn of mind, of whom it was said that during his service as Viceroy of India he built behind his office a small Chapel to which he would repair to seek 'enlightenment from above' before any important meetings or talks".

Maisky has a word to say about the policy of America during this period The USA was in full sympathy with British policy during this period On the 28th September when it was announced that Chamberlain would be flying to Munich next day Roosevelt sent a telegram consisting of two words 'Good Man' And immediately after Chamberlain's return from Munich, Kennedy, the American Ambassador in London, said that the British people should erect a statue in gold to their Premier, as he had saved them from war The American policy during this period was often summed up by American leaders themselves thus 'We are prepared for any action short of war ' They could not possibly have uttered those last three words, says Maisky, if they had any serious thought of containing aggression, because international bandits of the type of Hitler and Mussolini should understand only one kind of argument, force

It is a refreshing thought that when the policy of appeasement was rife in Britain and France, enlightened Indian opinion was all against it The Indian National Congress did not succumb to the temptation of siding with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy on the ground that your enemy's enemy is your friend On the contrary, it expressed its abhorrence of Fascism and Nazism at its annual session, year after year

Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a close student of international affairs, knew that there was a close affinity between imperialism and fascism Indeed, he said, they were 'twin sisters'

'My whole nature', said Nehru, 'rebelled against them, and on many an occasion I vehemently criticised the pro-fascist and appeasement policy of the British Government Ever since the invasion of Manchuria, and subsequently in Abyssinia, Central Europe, Spain and China, I saw with pain and anguish how country after country was betrayed in the name of appeasement and how the lamps of liberty were put out I realised that imperialism could only function this way, it had to appease its rival imperialism, or else its own ideological foundations were weakened '

Here was the voice of independent India which began to be heard even before India became independent

(*Swarajya*, 1978)

38. Asian Consciousness and Collective Security

'Asia fascinates me, the long past of Asia, the achievements of Asia through millennia of history, the troubled present of Asia and the future that is taking shape almost before our eyes' So wrote Jawaharlal Nehru in his Introduction to my book, *Delhi-Chungking*, soon after he formed the interim government of India in 1946 These words reflect what might be called the Asian consciousness of Jawaharlal Nehru

In India this awareness had been slowly but steadily growing In the early years of the Indian National Congress, it expressed itself in an attitude of opposition to the use of Indian troops and Indian resources to curb the freedom of other countries, such as Persia, Egypt and Afghanistan To give only one example, Sir C Sankaran Nair, who presided over the Amravati session of the Congress in 1897, denounced the expansionist policy of Great Britain thus 'An army is maintained at our cost far in excess of what it should be The military element is supreme in the Viceroy's Council For interests other than Indian, countries are invaded and all the horrors of war let loose at the expense of the Indian tax-payer'

'Our true policy', said Sir Sankaran Nair, 'is a peaceful policy We have little if anything to expect from conquests With such capacity for internal development as our country possesses, with such crying need to carry out the reforms absolutely necessary for our well-being, we want a period of prolonged peace We have no complaint against our neighbours, either on our north-west or our north-east frontier'

These are words which Jawaharlal Nehru himself might have uttered With the advent of Nehru as well as Gandhi on the Indian scene the sentiment of Asian consciousness began to gain in intensity Mahatma Gandhi supported the Khilafat movement to denote India's sympathy with the ostensible sentiments of the Islamic peoples And when Mustafa Kemal Pasha, who abolished the Khilafat, routed the British forces from Turkey, the Congress sent its congratulations to him and to the people of Turkey

The Congress was opposed to imperialism in all its forms, whether white, black, brown or yellow When Japan took to the path of imperialism vis-a-vis China and Korea, Rabindranath Tagore, who had always been an ardent admirer of the gracious civilisation of Japan, denounced it in the strongest possible language Referring to the Japanese exploitation of Korea, he said that it showed that 'the blood-hounds of Satan can be bred not only in the kennels of Europe but domesticated in Asia and fed with man's miseries' In 1938 the Congress declared a boycott of Japanese goods in protest against the conduct of Japan in China It also sent a medical mission to Yenan under Dr Kotnis who laid down his life in China and has become a legendary figure there And in 1939 Jawaharlal Nehru himself spent a fortnight in China, even as he had visited Egypt the previous year and forged friendships with the Wafd leaders and others striving for Egypt's independence

One of the first steps taken by Jawaharlal Nehru after he formed the interim Government of India was to convene an Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in the spring of 1947 It is significant that it was attended by the Asian Republics of the USSR. When Nehru was in Moscow in 1927 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Great October Revolution he had observed that 'in Moscow Asia peeps out from every corner' The invitation extended to the Asian Republics of the USSR to attend the Conference was at once a recognition of the Eurasian character of the USSR and a gesture of friendship to a state which had consistently supported the movements for independence in Asia.

In burning words Nehru placed the Asian Relations Conference in its historical context 'For far too long,' he said, 'have Asian countries been supplicants before the Chancelleries of the West' No longer would Asians permit themselves to be 'the playthings of others' 'We meet together,' he said, 'we hold together, we advance together'

Nehru was one of the men who charted the course which not only India but many other countries in Asia and Africa were to follow Dr Henry F Grady, the first American ambassador to India, used to talk of a 'Nehru Plan for Asia', corresponding to the 'Marshall Plan for Europe' Far from being flattered by this compliment, Nehru was embarrassed by it, even as it is embarrassing for Brezhnev to be perpetually told of 'the Brezhnev Plan of collective security in Asia' 'Here,' said Nehru at the Asian Relations Conference, 'there are no leaders and no followers'

Nehru disavowed any intention of imposing, or even proposing, a

Plan for all Asia At the same time he hoped that the countries of Asia, which were just emerging from the 'Vasco da Gama era', had learnt a lesson from their dire experiences, and would strive to avoid the mistakes of the past and preserve their hard-won independence by joint efforts

This is also the basis of the much-talked-of 'Brezhnev scheme for collective security in Asia' For Brezhnev it was part of his search for a world-wide detente and a relaxation of international tensions everywhere At the Twentyfourth Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR, he put forward this idea in the following words 'In setting the goal of extending the zone of relaxation to the whole world, we think it is important that Asia should join this process on a broad scale Here we proceed not only from the interests of our own country, two-thirds of whose territory is in Asia We take into account the place this continent holds in the life of mankind, the role of Asian states in world politics and the interests of Asia itself and its peoples '

'The system we are advocating', said Brezhnev, 'does not and must not give anybody any unilateral advantages Every Asian state would make a contribution to its establishment ' At the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow in October 1973, Brezhnev replied specifically to the allegation that his proposal was intended to contain China 'As if a nation of 900 million people could be contained!"

Brezhnev pointed out that he was not casting the seed of Asian security 'on unprepared ground Many principles on which it could be based have been proclaimed in the historic decisions of the Bandung Conference, and others are reflected in a number of international documents concerning Asia '

I hope this article will show that the roots of collective security in Asia go much farther back than Bandung It is a far cry from Sir Sankaran Nair's Presidential Address to the Amravati Congress in 1897 to Mr Brezhnev's speech at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the formation of the USSR at Moscow in 1972, but the silver thread of Asian unity has been running through Asian countries all these years It is time we turned into a hoop of steel, not for aggression or expansion, but for resisting the still remaining and, in some respects, even increasing threats to the independence of Asian countries, such as the proposed establishment of a mighty nuclear-powered naval base in Diego Garcia

(*Secular Democracy*, 1974)

39. The Oil and the Ocean

The two burning problems of the day are the shortage and dearness of oil and the proposed location of an Anglo-American naval base in the Indian Ocean And there is a connection between the oil and the ocean

The essence of the oil crisis is that oil-producing countries have at long last asserted their sovereign rights over their own natural resources For centuries these had been exploited by foreign companies, with the powerful support of foreign governments, and they had reaped profits beyond the dreams of avarice

In this connection, I recall an incident which occurred in 1934 during my voyage on S S Kampala from Bombay to Mombasa on a mission to investigate the conditions of Indians in East Africa I had the honour of being seated at the captain's table in the dining-room At that time, Persia, as Iran used to be called, had appealed to the League of Nations for an increase in royalties, and the decision went in its favour When someone round the table expressed satisfaction that justice had been done to Persia, the British captain, an expansive individual, remarked that 'the next time Persia behaves like this there will be no Persia left' By and large that was the attitude of westerners towards Asians and Africans

The oil-producing countries in the Middle East have at last assumed control over their principal natural resource, oil They have reduced production and increased prices In doing so, they are following the example of the Oil Companies, which, too, used to reduce production, or refuse to increase it, in order to keep up prices

'Oil', said Jawaharlal Nehru, 'is an oily business' Recent revelations in Washington have shown how the Iraq Petroleum Company resorted to trickery and deception in order to hoodwink the Iraq government which was anxious to increase the production of oil and earn more revenue The Company is said to have drilled wells to wrong depths, plugged off existing wells and even covered up some of the wells by bulldozers And we in India know how Western experts, who had been engaged to explore for oil in Western India, reported

that there was no oil there, and how Soviet experts, whom we approached thereafter, found oil in that very region

This year the eleven major oil-producing countries are expected to earn 100,000 million dollars, or four times as much as in 1973, and by 1980 their earnings are expected to reach the figure of 150,000 million dollars Their objective, however, in raising prices is not so much to earn material profits as to gain political ends As President Boumedienne of Algeria said at the recent Islamic meet in Lahore, 'Oil is just a card we are using and, we hope, with good results In future, the voice of the third world will be listened to with greater respect in the United Nations' And in an interview with the special correspondent of *The New York Times*, the Shah of Iran said 'Many countries are now learning to see us differently, to take us seriously Europe has started, and the USA will soon'

Eighty-five per cent of the world's petroleum output is consumed by 13 rich countries, including Japan Already their attitude towards the Arabs has undergone a change Japan, which used to toe the American line in regard to the Arab-Israeli problem, changed its policy overnight, and has extended a credit of 400 million dollars to Egypt and 500 million to Iraq The US Government would have preferred to follow a course of joint confrontation with the Arab States, but Western Europe would not play, and the net result has been, not a confrontation between the oil-producing countries and the oil-consuming ones, but between the USA and France, which openly demurred to the policy of the US Government And now the Western governments are tumbling over one another in concluding bilateral agreements with Iran, Saudi Arabia and other Arab States, including the Sheikhdoms of the Middle East, by supplying arms and setting up industrial units, electrical networks and petro-chemical plants

The Indian Ocean region is rich not merely in oil, but in other vital raw materials It produces 40 per cent of the world's gold, 60 per cent of the uranium, 90 per cent of the tea, rubber and jute and 98 per cent of the diamonds For centuries these resources used to be merrily exploited by Western powers, and it is on this that their prosperity was built If the peoples of this region were to nationalise them or to demand a more equitable share of the profits, it would mean a corresponding diminution in the fabulous profits made by the Western States, and one reason for the proposed Anglo-American base in Diego Garcia is to intimidate them What used to be called 'gunboat diplomacy' in the 19th century is now being continued in the form of 'aircraft-carrier diplomacy'

It used to be said that Diego Garcia was going to be simply 'a modest naval support station' Indeed, a spokesman of the US Embassy in New Delhi recently observed that 'Diego Garcia is not a base A base is a place where you base things, and nothing is going to be based there So it is not a base'

Very different was the evidence given by responsible officers before the Senate Armed Services Committee and the House Committee in Washington Admiral Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the 12th of March 1974, that the intention was to accommodate B-52 strategic bombers, which are the US Air Force's principal nuclear weapon-carriers, in Diego Garcia This was exactly the opposite of what the State Department had been saying At the next meeting, Admiral Moorer said that he misunderstood the question put to him by the Chairman and that the base would not be wide enough or strong enough for 'continuous operation of loaded B-52s' Under questioning, however, he said he was in favour of giving a permanent B-52 capability to the base At a later session Air Force General Loving stated that it was the intention to station F-111 bombers at Diego Garcia These are capable of carrying atomic weapons and have a range of 3,200 kilometres And Diego Garcia is only 2,500 kilometres from South India

There are some far-sighted people in the West who realise that, whatever it might do, the days when Europe and America could freely exploit Asia and Africa are over Allan M Mathias, a former Editor of the *Minerals Year Book*, has observed in an article in *The New York Times* that the secret of Western prosperity used to be that they bought raw materials from Asia, Africa and Latin America at 'dirtcheap prices' 'We bought them', he said, 'under terms similar to those under which we bought Manhattan Island from the Indians' Those days are gone, said Mathias, and industrialised countries have to learn to live with high petroleum prices and pay more than previous prices for other raw materials This means lower standards of living in those countries, but still Americans would be infinitely better off than the people of the developing countries 'Would it be really such a terrible world,' asks Mathias, 'if we are only ten times as rich as almost every else, instead of twenty times?'

The excuse for the creation of an Anglo-American base in Diego Garcia is that there has been increasing Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean The fact, however, remains that whereas Western countries have some two dozen bases in the Indian Ocean the Soviet Union has

none The stories put out on the eve of Brezhnev's visit to India last November that the USSR will ask for, and India would give, a naval base have proved to be false The number of Soviet ships which have visited the Indian Ocean during recent years do not come to more than 10 or 15 'This limited presence', writes Geffrey Jukes in an article in *Survival* on 'The Soviet Union and The Indian Ocean', 'forms a natural part of the process of its growth from a very strong regional continental power to global rank It challenges the concept of the Indian Ocean as a Western lake, as did its earlier incursion into the Mediterranean, and serves to persuade the countries of the area that Soviet military power is both tangible and relevant to their own circumstances, whether in comparison with the West or China'

In the above passage the reference to the Soviet Union's 'incursion into the Mediterranean' is highly relevant For decades Egypt had been an Anglo-French protectorate Even after it ceased to be so it was expected to remain in the Western orbit In 1955, however, Egypt had the temerity to obtain a small quantity of arms from Czechoslovakia That was more than John Foster Dulles, the high priest of anti-Communism, could bear He, therefore, churlishly withdrew the proffered American aid for the construction of the Aswan Dam There followed a series of dramatic events such as the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt and the fall of Prime Minister Eden Then the Soviet Union entered the Mediterranean region once and for all as a power that counted Thus the net result of the attempt to keep the Soviet Union out of the Mediterranean was to bring it in That is what is likely to happen in the Indian Ocean, too

It is strange that 'the limited Soviet presence' in the Indian Ocean should excite so much concern in the West, even in these days of Great Power detente One can only think that the Soviet presence is being used as an excuse for dominating this region Moreover, beneath the smooth surface of the detente, the cold war mentality seems to be still lurking Hanson Baldwin, the chief American expert on defence matters, has written 'In the age of missiles and nuclear warheads the Indian Ocean, the third largest in the world, is a huge landing pad for missile-carrying submarines It is as close to many Russian industrial centres as the Mediterranean and perhaps even closer, and it is less protected'

The Soviet Union cannot be an idle by-stander when such developments are taking place The establishment of the proposed naval base in Diego Garcia is bound to increase international tension in this

region The presence of nuclear-powered ships and submarines, side by side, will add to the prospect of a war—and that, a nuclear war—breaking out by design or accident The naval base in Diego Garcia must, therefore, be regarded as a threat to world peace as well as to the economic independence of the States of Asia and Africa

The remedy lies in cultivating unity on the one hand and world opinion on the other The recent history of the Arabs has provided confirmation of the old saying United we stand, divided we fall The Arab States were divided and fell before Israel, they are now united and have stood up to Israel

World opinion, too, is important It may often seem elusive and even delusive, and yet, it does have an effect in the long run It is a matter for satisfaction that Australia and New Zealand now have governments who have been rowing with, and not against, Asian opinion It is also something to be thankful for that the new British Government has at last offered to reconsider the whole question of an American naval base in Diego Garcia One can only hope that enlightened public opinion in the West, and notably in the USA itself, will respect the unanimous opinion in Asian and African States and compel the USA to abandon a project which constitutes a defiance not only of Asian and African opinion but of the United Nations, which has visualised the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace

(Feature Unit, 1974)

40 Local and Fundamental Interests

Daniel Moynihan, Ambassador of the USA to India, recently made some observations about the projected Anglo-American naval base in Diego Garcia Apart from being a diplomat, Moynihan is regarded as one of the leading intellectuals in the USA His words, therefore, deserve special attention

Moynihan remarked that the USA had certain fundamental interests in the Indian Ocean, in comparison with which India had only local interests As well, he quipped, might the Indian Ocean be called the Madagascar Bay! Madagascar, however, is unlikely to be pleased or propitiated by this gesture, for Malagasy, as it is now called, has withdrawn all berthing facilities from American ships in protest against the American naval base in Diego Garcia

Moynihan is not the first to suggest the renaming of seas and oceans There was a megalomaniac called Benito Mussolini who wanted to rename the Mediterranean Sea 'the Roman Sea' Similarly, President Sukarno wanted to rename the Indian Ocean 'the Indonesian Ocean' Both Mussolini and Sukarno have gone with the wind, but the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea remain

Diego Garcia is a multi-syllabic, mellifluous word In this connection some other names, equally mellifluous, come to mind—Maddalena, Eleusis, Kefavic, Udonthani and Lourenco Marques Each of them is an American base None of them is situated anywhere near the USA Maddalena is in Italy, Eleusis is in Greece, Kefavic is in Iceland, Udonthani is in Thailand, and Lourenco Marques is in Mozambique

A nation's fundamental interest is the preservation of its territorial integrity America's security is not enhanced by the existence of the above named places, situated thousands of miles away from America, nor would it be endangered if these bases did not exist To a layman it is difficult to see what fundamental interest is served by these bases

The term, fundamental, however, is capable of different interpretations We know how the fundamental rights, enshrined in our Constitution, have been invoked by the vested interests to defeat the direc-

tive principles of the Constitution and to block much-needed socio-economic legislation We also know how, in a famous judgement, a majority of the Supreme Court took the view—since reversed—that fundamental rights are beyond even the sovereignty of Parliament

Another mystic word, which was current in British times, is paramountcy British Government used to assert the paramountcy of the Crown vis-a-vis the Princes of India and offered it as a justification for its interference in the internal affairs of the States, even sometimes to the extent of deposing the ruler The rulers protested that the doctrine of paramountcy was a violation of the Treaties which had been entered into on a footing of equality between the Princes and the East India Company Thereupon a Royal Commission was appointed to go into the whole question of paramountcy, and it came to the sage conclusion that 'paramountcy is paramount' Similarly it would seem that fundamental interests are fundamental and above international law

In concrete terms, what are the fundamental interests which are proposed to be safeguarded by the naval base in the Indian Ocean? Is it intended to emphasise the right of the British, American and other Western Governments to continue to exploit the rich natural resources of the Indian Ocean region and to intimidate any one, who, like the Arabs, may refuse to continue to be exploited? If so, it is not likely to succeed

Or, is the base meant, as it has been proclaimed, to counter Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean But the Soviet Union, too, is a global power It will not permit notices to be put up anywhere, saying 'Trespassers will be prosecuted' After all, freedom of navigation in the open sea is a right recognised from time immemorial

Recently, Weiss, the US State Department Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, who testified before the House Committee on South Asian affairs, said that a base in Diego Garcia was necessary because of the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean In reply to a question put by Hamilton, the Chairman of the House Committee, Weiss said that even if there were no Soviet presence the USA would have to go ahead with the construction of the base in pursuit of its fundamental interests Hamilton then chided Weiss for assuming the role of the world's policeman

In the time of John Foster Dulles, the USA sought to play the role not only of the world's policeman, but the world's saviour The US Government was out to save the world from the 'ungodly creed of Communism' It was in pursuit of this US goal that MacArthur

crossed the 38th parallel and entered North Korea in disregard of the relevant resolution of the United Nations The USA incurred some 140,000 casualties, including 43,000 dead, and yet North Korea remains exactly where it was and President Kim Il Sung is more firmly entrenched than ever. It was America's protege in South Korea, the estimable Dr Syngman Rhee, who had to flee into exile Again, it was the notion that the USA's fundamental interests were involved which persuaded it to support the military regime in West Pakistan in its orgy of repression in Bangladesh and in the war it launched against India This, however, did not prevent Bangladesh from rising to freedom or India from supporting it

Perhaps the most blatant example of the folly of pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of fundamental interests has occurred in Vietnam A few days ago, the American policy of confronting Communism in South East Asia came to a *reductio ad absurdum* when the Chinese seized the Paracels Islands, which South Vietnam claimed as its own, and America refused to go to the help of its ally and openly declared a hands-off policy

One would have thought that the USA would have learnt a lesson from its futile and, indeed, fatal pursuit of its 'fundamental interests' in Korea, Vietnam and Bangladesh But, as Benedetto Croce has put it, man learns nothing from history except that man learns nothing from history

There is one fundamental interest which is common to all mankind, and that is the preservation of peace and the prevention of a nuclear war The establishment of an American nuclear-powered base, which is bound to provoke counter-measures from other Great Powers, will greatly increase international tensions and be a threat to world peace This is an aspect which concerns the people not merely of Asia and Africa but of the whole world

(*Patriot*, 1974)

41. Nuclear Blast and Neurotic Reactions

The explosion of a nuclear device by Indian scientists has caused a variety of reactions jubilation, satisfaction, uneasiness, alarm and anger The reactions have ranged from the enthusiastic applause of Yugoslavia and the French Atomic Energy Commission to the resentment of Japan and Canada, who otherwise have been conspicuously friendly to India The USSR has accepted without demur Mrs Gandhi's statement that the explosion was purely for peaceful purposes and has given prominence to it The Governments of the UK and the USA, while generally deploring nuclear proliferation, have shown restraint in criticising India This, however, cannot be said of their organs of publicity Indeed some newspapers have been almost venomous and indulged in what Jawaharlal Nehru, when roused to anger, used to call 'fantastic nonsense'

So far as I remember the first time Nehru used this expression was when Mohamed Ali Jinnah, not content with the partition of India, demanded a corridor connecting West Pakistan and East Pakistan Nehru promptly denounced it as fantastic nonsense His outright condemnation settled the matter once and for all and Jinnah never reverted to it Jinnah, however, did not suspect, nor for that matter did Nehru, that the very creation of East Pakistan as an adjunct to West Pakistan would turn out to be a piece of fantastic nonsense and would be annulled in less than a quarter of a century

If Nehru were alive today he would have used his favourite expletive about some of the comments on India's nuclear explosion As might be expected, Bhutto has taken the lead in denouncing it There was a time when he fancied himself as a knight in shining armour carrying on a 'thousand year war' between India and Pakistan It looked as if he had discarded his accountrements at the Simla conference, but since, according to him, 'India has risen like a giant, brandishing the nuclear sword', he seems to have put them on again He congratulates himself for not having succumbed to India's blandishments and for not having signed a 'no-war declaration' between the two countries Such a declaration, says Bhutto, was always meaningless, now, more than over

To Bhutto, as to General Clausewitz, diplomacy is war by other means He has launched that war with a vengeance In a flurry of diplomatic activity he sent his Foreign Secretary to Britain, France and China He himself would take up the matter with the USSR on his forthcoming visit to Moscow His Ambassador to the UN would raise the matter in the Security Council, and his Foreign Minister has already raised it at the recent meeting of CENTO in Teheran CENTO contented itself by saying in its joint communique that the underground nuclear test by India 'has introduced a new factor with world and regional implications which will require further study' And the Secretary-General of CENTO made it clear that it implied no criticism of India but was just a statement of fact This non-committal attitude on the part of CENTO was the more significant because it was attended by the representatives of the two great powers, Britain and the USA

To some extent Pakistan's adverse reaction was predictable After all, Pakistan has been trying to maintain its identity, and until recently the identity of the interests of West Pakistan and East Pakistan, by the cry of the big bad wolf next door Now that the wolf has acquired nuclear teeth it has become bigger and badder than ever before!

What has been surprising is the intensity of the reactions in some other parts of the world On the whole governments and especially governments of the Great Powers have reacted with moderation The first statement issued by the US Government was simply that 'the USA has always been against nuclear proliferation because of the adverse effect it will have on world stability' The USA has been consistent in this attitude As the would-be guardian of world stability it refused to share the secret of the atom bomb with its war-time ally, the USSR Nothing contributed so much as this refusal to the resurgence of the cold war after World War II This did not however, prevent the USSR from making the atom bomb and later the hydrogen bomb I was present at the special session of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow in 1953 when Malenkov, the then Prime Minister, announced amidst thunderous applause that the USA no longer had the monopoly of the hydrogen bomb

By 1967, the USA, the USSR and the UK, having perfected their weapons systems concluded a test-ban treaty banning explosions in the air and underwater in the seas France and China refused to sign the treaty and carried out experiments overground, to the intense annoyance of the three-member nuclear club, which then became a five-member club 'And now we are six,' said the Columbia broadcasting

network on 18 May 1974, 'India has joined the exclusive nuclear club

Some organs of publicity in the USA and the UK have, in glaring contrast to the reticence of their Governments, let themselves go in denouncing India's conduct The London *Times*, for instance, has observed that the primary purpose of the explosion was 'to rally support for an ailing Government and to divert attention from the problems it has failed to solve' This is contrary to the facts India has never concealed its intention to carry out nuclear tests for peaceful purposes It is for this reason that it refused to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, sponsored by the USA, the UK and the USSR As early as July 1971, the Prime Minister told the Parliamentary committee for atomic energy that the Government would experiment with nuclear explosions for engineering purposes

The New York Times has gone much farther than the London *Times* in its condemnation of India It deplores the fact that 'so much talent and resources have been squandered on the vanity of power while 600 million Indians slip deeper into poverty', and it pours scorn on 'the sixth member of the nuclear club which may be passing the beggar bowl before the year is out'

One is tempted to retort that if 600 million Indians are in dire poverty, the responsibility for it falls partly, but heavily, on the policy of the US Government It was John Foster Dulles who introduced the cold war, which eventually turned out to be a hot war, into this subcontinent It was he who enticed Pakistan to join such organisations as SEATO and CENTO, encouraged it to claim parity with India by the grant of billions of dollars of arms and equipment and thus compelled India to divert vast sums of money from the mission of improving peoples' standard of living to the task of defending itself against an aggressive and American-backed Pakistan

What about China, it may be asked Here, again, it was the American policy of treating China as an outcast among nations and of keeping it out of the UN for more than two decades which produced weird complexes in the Chinese mind, as a similar policy had done earlier in respect of the USSR It was this which was largely responsible for China's behaviour as an outlaw, flinging defiance at the international community including its own neighbours

In particular, one great opportunity was missed on account of American recalcitrance That was at the height of the Korean war There was a moment when the world seemed to be on the brink of World War III Then Jawaharlal Nehru devised a plan, which had the

support of the British Government and under which there would have been an international conference to end the Korean War, to settle the Korean problem and to bring China into the United Nations This move, which was full of hopeful potentialities, was defeated by the determination of the US Government to brand China as an aggressor, despite the fact that it was the unauthorised crossing of the 38th Parallel by Gen MacArthur which provoked China to enter the war That was the moment when China finally decided to withdraw into itself and develop its strength for all it was worth and to become a nuclear power and hold the world at bay And when China showed that it could no longer be treated cavalierly, President Nixon paid his dramatic visit to Peking, to the confusion of many of America's own allies who had been recruited for the crusade against China

It is no pleasure to rake up these events at a time when a commendable effort is being made both by India and by the USA to strengthen their relations This, however, cannot be done by ignoring the unpleasant facts of history It would be wiser to look those facts in the face and discard the psychology which lay behind them and which has produced wars, hot and cold It is a combination of jealousy, suspicion, hatred, contempt for weaker peoples and the temptation to exploit them

The cold war which set in after World War II might seem to have abated, but not the psychological factors which produced it What is needed is not, to use an expression of George Ball, a former US Under Secretary of State, 'manipulative diplomacy', but to use a magnificent phrase of Mahatma Gandhi's, 'a change of heart' on the part of all concerned. Such a change can best be demonstrated by an agreement to ban all nuclear tests for non-peaceful purposes, including underground tests, under a strict system of international inspection and to destroy all existing bombs, of which there is already a sufficient number to destroy the world many times over Unless there is such a change, nothing will stand between civilisation and catastrophe

(*Indian Express*, 1974)

42 'A Curse on American Arms'

'There seems to be a curse on American arms Defeat follows wherever they go'

So said our Foreign Minister, Y B Chavan, more in sorrow than in anger Sorrow for the victims of American arms and for America itself which has suffered grievously in men, money, prestige and credibility, on account of its Government's policies, especially towards 'The Third World', during the post-war period

In the hour of misfortune, one offers a word of sympathy to one's friends What is more valuable than sympathy may be the view of a neutral observer—and an observer sees more of the game than the players—as to how the misfortunes were caused in the past and could be avoided in the future

Today, almost all Americans, except a handful who are interested in maintaining the aura of their infallibility, admit that American policy in Asia, particularly after the Second World War, has not been a shining success Indeed many would go further and admit that it has been, to use an ugly but fashionable word, counter-productive That has been the case in China, in Korea, in Vietnam, in Cambodia and in the Indian sub-continent

To take China first, Kuomintang China had the massive military and political support of the USA President Chiang Kai-shek was regarded as a man of destiny, Madame Chiang was almost canonised in America, China was exalted into a Great Power and it took its seat as one of the Big Five in the United Nations Yet within three years, the Communists came to power and Chiang Kai-shek had to flee ignominiously from the mainland into Taiwan Despite the support of the USA, Kuomintang China collapsed, because it had alienated the people by its corruption and maladministration How corrupt it was may be seen from the fact that the American arms sent to China were often sold by Kuomintang generals to the Communists, so much so that in 1946 a story was current in China that Mao Tse-tung had sent a telegram to President Truman saying 'Please do not send any more arms to Chiang Kai-shek we have enough.'

The US Government knew what was happening but it acted on the principle, which was enunciated by the US Armed Forces Committee which visited China towards the end of 1947 and reported that 'in spite of alleged and in many respects admitted corrupt practices in the Chinese National Government, it is highly preferable that the United States have a free, though immoral, Government in China, than to have a hostile Government—no matter how pure and moral—dominated by Communist influences' (And in American eyes the term 'Communist' covers a multitude of sins) It was this vicious principle which animated American policy from China to Chile

Even after the Chinese revolution of 1949 the US Government refused to come to grips with realities It refused to recognise the People's Republic of China on the assumption that it was but a puppet state of the Soviet Union, or, as Dean Rusk put it, 'a Slavonic Manchukuo it does not satisfy the first condition of recognition, it is not Chinese' It is this refusal to recognise revolutionary China and the prolonged exclusion of China from the UN which produced weird complexes in the Chinese mind When eventually, China produced an atom bomb and it became clear that it was the UN, rather than China, which suffered by its exclusion, President Nixon, with an eye on the presidential election, went to Peking and, as the *New York Times* put it, allowed himself to be treated as 'a hippie in the court of King Mao'

In Korea, too, the US Government met with a military rebuff It interfered justifiably, with the UN behind it, to halt the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950 Having attained this objective, however, General MacArthur, without authorisation from the UN, crossed the 38th parallel into North Korea and carried his army right up to the Yalu River, which separates Korea from China Then the Chinese intervened decisively and mowed down American soldiers by the thousand The USA sustained 142,000 casualties, of whom 23,000 were killed and 105,000 wounded the Commonwealth troops suffered 7,000 casualties and the Turks 3,000 These were inconsiderable compared with the huge losses suffered by the Koreans South Korea is estimated to have sustained 184,000 casualties As for North Korea, J F Dulles mentioned grimly that of the ten million people in North Korea, one in every three was dead And all this turned out to be for nothing, because Korea still remains divided, and President Kim Il Sung is as firmly entrenched in North Korea as ever

At the end of the Korean war, General Feetwood exclaimed 'We must have a Korea here or elsewhere ' Before long they had a Korea, a thousand times magnified, in Vietnam The original mistake was the

failure to understand Ho Chi Minh, who, though a Communist, was a nationalist through and through, and to treat him as a tool of Peking, and Vietnam as a 'Chinese Manchukuo' In regarding him and Vietnam thus, the USA ignored the historical, thousand-year-old antipathy between the Chinese and the Vietnamese and the character of Ho himself So the USA egged on France to continue a hopeless fight against the Vietnamese and met 70 per cent of the cost of the war, until France was decisively defeated at the battle of Dien Bien Phu Then there was a fierce outcry in the USA against France The American magazine, *Life*, let off a blast on French politics which it described as 'a bed-room farce' and France itself as 'a whore waiting to stuff billion dollar bills down her stocking' And *Time*, another American magazine, observed loftily 'Hitherto the United States had proceeded on the assumption that France is a Great Power It is now clear that this was a great mistake In future, the United States must go ahead in the knowledge that France does not count as a factor even for her own defence ' Before long President De Gaulle demonstrated that after all France did count not only for its own defence, but for the defence of Europe

There followed the Geneva Conference over Vietnam in 1954, which promised to bring peace to a harassed land Under that settlement, Vietnam was to have been partitioned, hopefully temporarily, but the very thought of partition was anathema to John Foster Dulles He refused to shake hands with Chou En-lai, who had come to attend the Geneva Conference, and left it in a huff, saying that the only partition to which he would agree would be to lock up the Communists 'In a room of about this size, up north'

The subsequent developments are too well known to be related here Even at that time there were perspicacious Americans who protested against the policy of supporting unpopular regimes in the name of freedom and democracy 'At our command', wrote Henry Wallace, 'freedom, in whose name Americans have died, will become a catchword for reaction Once we grant unconditional loans to the undemocratic Governments of Greece and Turkey, then, in the name of freedom, every Fascist dictator will know that he has credit in our bank Today it is the Governments of Greece and Turkey, tomorrow it may be Peron and Chiang Kai-shek Our arsenals will give weapons When that is not enough, our people will be asked to give their sons '

This warning has indeed proved to be correct, for this is exactly what happened in Vietnam The USA gave dollars to the Government

of South Vietnam, then weapons and finally its own sons, black as well as white At one time more than 500,000 American soldiers were fighting in Vietnam

Now the war in Vietnam has come to an ignominious end As the *Financial Times*, London, has put it So it was for this that 50,000 Americans and God knows how many Vietnamese died For this 200 billion dollars were poured out To this end President Johnson and his Great Society were ruined and the summit of American politics ceded to a bunch of political thugs So much blood, as much treasure, so many words, so many consciences expended for nothing—and indeed less than nothing '

The same story was repeated in Cambodia Five years ago the decision was taken to overthrow Prince Sihanouk The responsibility for this decision lay entirely on President Nixon and Dr Kissinger, who took it in the teeth of opposition from Rogers, Secretary of State, Melville Laird, Defence Secretary, three of Dr Kissinger's own staff who resigned, and General Wheeler, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who exclaimed 'Why must Westy [General Westmoreland] have more battle fronts to fight on?' US Government could not bear the neutralism of Prince Sihanouk and successfully manoeuvred to have him replaced by their own henchman, Lon Nol Now Lon Nol is in exile, his brother is in detention, and his Prime Minister has been arrested as one of the seven 'traitors' marked for death, and Prince Sihanouk has been proclaimed again as Head of the State True he has returned with the support of China and on the shoulders of the Khmer Rouge For this the sole responsibility rests on the USA Thus, American policy, which was designed to exclude Communism from Cambodia, has decidedly brought it in

President Nixon's 'tilt' towards Pakistan during the orgy of repression launched on the people of Bangladesh by President Yahya Khan also showed the tendency of the USA to support regimes, ostensibly and obstentatiously friendly to the USA, however unrepresentative and unpopular they might be It must be said that by and large this has been the policy of America since the Second World War President Kennedy bade fair to be an exception He had summed up his policy as 'a cold handshake for dictators and a warm embrace for democrats ' President Nixon's attitude was exactly the reverse So far as the Indian sub-continent is concerned, it showed itself in his open support of the dictatorial regime in West Pakistan It was this attitude which encouraged President Yahya Khan 'to cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war' Human memory is apt to be short So let us remember

that in Bangladesh three million people were killed in cold blood, 300,000 women were raped and assaulted and 10 million Bengalees were forced to take refuge in India And the net result of Pakistan's exclusive reliance on force and on American arms was that it lost half its territory and more than half its population

There is a common denominator in the US Government's conduct in China, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and in the Indian sub-continent It can be described as an insensitivity to the wishes and aspirations of the people, a blind reliance on the efficacy of force and subversion and a tendency to support 'friendly' regimes which have little popular support This was recently shown in the resumption of arms supplies to Pakistan, which has been using them against its own people in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province An even more cynical exhibition of this attitude is the US Government's decision, in defiance of the relevant resolutions in the UN, to permit the export of a substantial quantity of highly enriched uranium to the blatantly racist government of South Africa, which will now be in a position to use it for the manufacture of atom bombs All this lends confirmation to the observation of the great historian, Arnold Toynbee, 'The USA has unfortunately become the leader of a world-wide anti-revolutionary movement in defence of vested interests She now stands for what Rome stood for Rome consistently supported the rich against the poor in all foreign communities that fell under her sway, and since, the poor so far have always and everywhere been far more numerous than the rich, Rome's policy made for inequality, for injustice and for the least happiness of the greatest number '

Toynbee's observation is fully borne out by a recent analysis of the Kissinger system and American policy generally by Richard Barnet, Co-Director of the Institute of Policy Studies in Washington 'Kissinger', says Barnet, 'defines security as maintaining the status quo around the world This involves active suppression of revolutionary change where possible and holding on to the present global economic order In the pursuit of stability he destabilises whole regions by reckless shipment of American arms The methods used by successive administrations include assassination of foreign leaders who stand up to the United States ' Again, 'the United States', he says, 'has been consistently on the wrong side in the former colonial world opposing the forces committed to the structural changes needed for survival in poor countries The United States should welcome any experiment, whatever the guiding ideology, that confronts poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and disease in the Third World '

One can only hope that such wise counsel will prevail Otherwise there will continue to be a curse on American arms, and wherever they go defeat will follow

(*The Indian Express*, 1975)

43. After Vietnam: The Mayaguez Mood

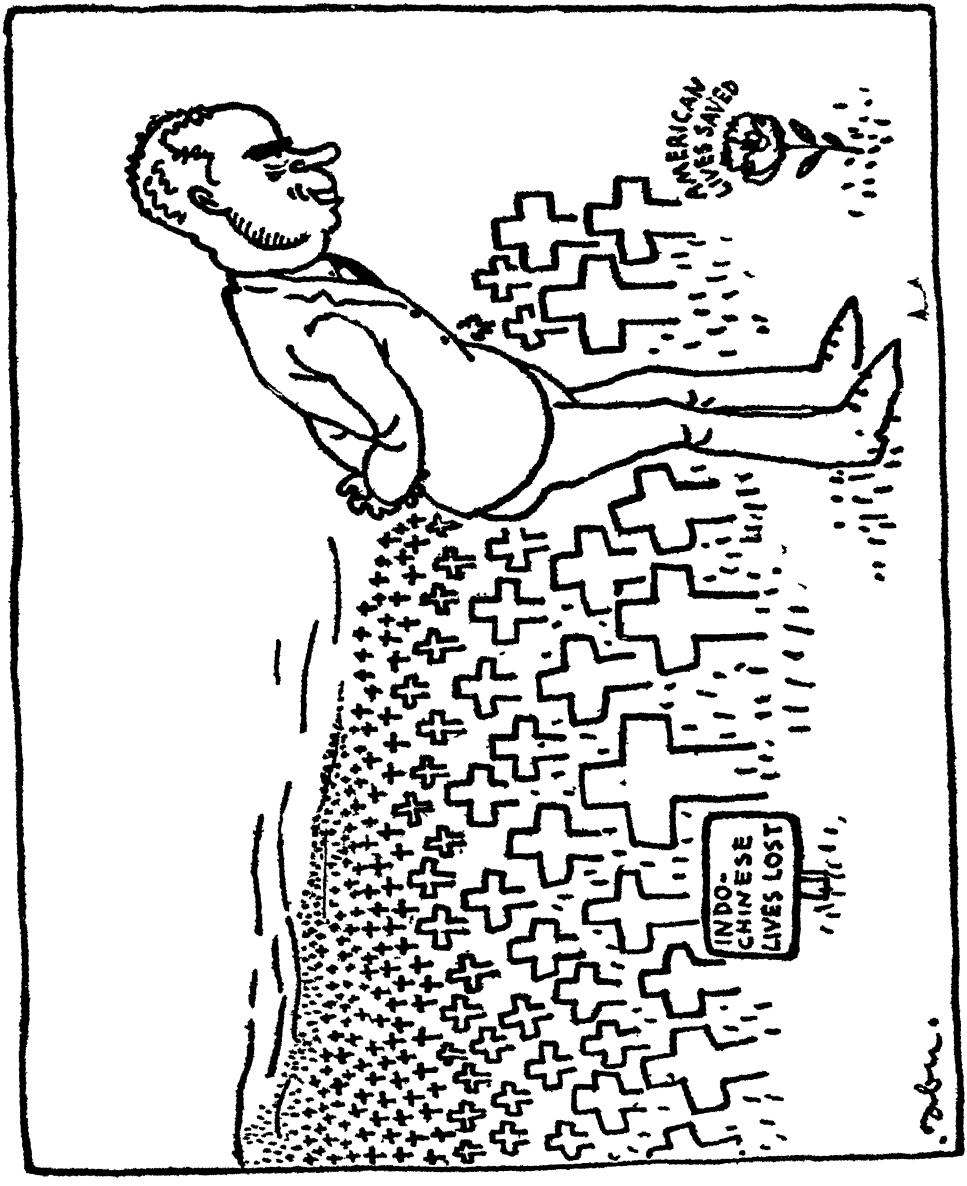
Some proper nouns occasionally become common nouns they stand for an ideal or an attribute To a student of ancient history, Athens stands for liberty, Rome for order, Jerusalem for religion and Sodom and Gomorrah for some unmentionable vices, though in these days of permissiveness, they have ceased to be immentionable or even unfashionable

To turn to the contemporary world, there was much talk of the 'Geneva Spirit' after the Summit Conference of the Big Four (China was still an outcast among nations) in Geneva in 1956 The 'Geneva Spirit' meant international detente It was reinforced by the 'Camp David Spirit' which was generated by the meeting of Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Camp David Both these spirits were effectively exorcised by the espionage flight of the American U-2 plane over Soviet territory on May Day, 1960 In our own sub-continent, the 'Simla Spirit' is still working fitfully, even though it has been seriously affected by the resumption of the supply of American arms to Pakistan

Similarly, the prevailing atmosphere in the USA today may be defined as the Mayaguez Mood It stands for the naked exhibition of power

Lovers of peace all over the world had hoped that after the USA's traumatic experience in Vietnam, there would be some heart-searching regarding the validity of its policies and the wisdom of the policy-makers To judge by the organs of public opinion, there has indeed been considerable heart-searching among the people There has been, however, very little evidence of it in the citadels of power Their principal concern seems to be to stay in power and to find some justification, or magnify or manufacture some incident, which will enable them to continue their present policies As Sam Brown, the State Treasurer of Colorado, one of the men interviewed by *Time* for their reactions to the fall of Saigon, said 'The group of people who make our foreign policy are the same men who made the decisions for the last 20 years—and made them badly'

President Ford summarised the official attitude when he said 'It is

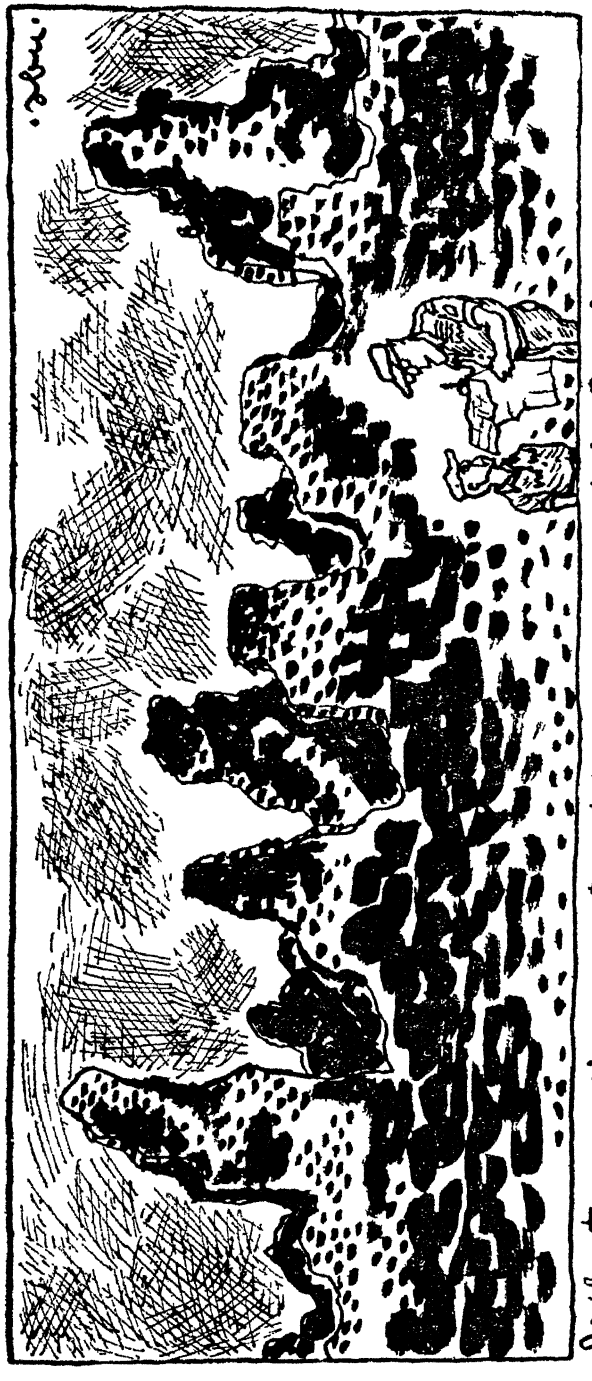

AMERICAN LIVES SAVED
INDO-CHINESE LIVES LOST

all over let us put it behind us' To many Americans, let alone Vietnamese, it is not so easy to put it behind them Thomas Hyland, who was seriously wounded while serving as a military adviser in Vietnam in 1968, was another person consulted by *Time* He said 'When I hear Ford say, let us forget about the past, I get enraged That's bullshit My brother-in-law wakes up every day without his legs How can he forget it? I suffered a great deal I can think of days when I lived from one morphine shot to the nest Isn't it true that this was a waste?' Hyland is but one of 303,000 Americans who were wounded and cannot forget As for the 55,000 killed, dead men tell no tales

The South Vietnamese cannot forget American conduct either As Commander Richard Stratton, who spent more than six years in a North American prison, said 'We led them down the primrose path and left them hanging on the end of the limb Then we sawed it off' On the 14th November 1972, immediately before the vaunted Paris agreements for which Dr Kissinger got the Nobel Prize for Peace, President Nixon wrote to President Thieu 'You have my absolute assurance that if Hanoi fails to abide by the terms of this agreement, it is my intention to take swift and retaliatory action' On the 5th January 1973, when President Thieu was still in two minds about the signing of the Agreement, President Nixon wrote, 'You have my assurance that we will respond with full force, should the settlement be violated by North Vietnam' And after the Agreements were signed, he lauded them to the skies, saying 'Let us be proud that America did not settle for a peace that would have betrayed our Allies—that would have ended the war for us but would have continued the war for the 50 million people of India-China' Yet this was exactly what happened

Those Cambodians, who had danced to the tune of the USA, had the same feeling of betrayal On the 20th April 1975, the retiring Cambodian Ambassador in Washington said pathetically at a Press Conference 'You took advantage of us and our inexperience You are much cleverer than we are, and so you induced us into this fighting If you had respected our neutrality, then the fighting, killing and other things might not have happened' Other South East Asian countries, too, have drawn the appropriate lessons Thailand, which had been an ally of the USA for 21 years in the SEATO, has ordered the US forces to leave within a year and the Philippines has ordered a study of the need for US bases there

American public opinion, too, was greatly agitated by the dire outcome of the 21 year war in Vietnam The Government itself, however, has remained obdurate The attitude of the US Government is reminis-


Is the town we've recaptured Quang Tri – or is it Que Son?

cent of the attitude of President Nixon after Watergate was finally brought home to him In his last statement announcing his resignation, there was not a trace of remorse, no shame, no compunction for the men he had totally ruined Similarly, little thought is given to the sheer waste of human life in the Vietnam war, nor to the 55,000 Americans killed, the 303,000 wounded and the 103,000 killed in non-military action, let alone to the countless millions of Vietnamese casualties Nor is there any shame that the war turned South Vietnam into what Senator Fulbright called 'a society of prostitutes and mercenaries'

There has been little appreciation of the fundamental issues involved in the Vietnam struggle, except on the part of a handful of people who are dismissed as 'eggheads' 'What happened', said Jane Fonda, the famous actress, 'is what happened to us 200 years ago a revolution for independence playing itself out in Vietnam To say Saigon has "fallen" is to say that the 13 American Colonies "fell" two centuries ago ' And her husband Tom Hayden, a founder of the Students for Democratic Society, said, 'This is the first time in over a hundred years that the country has not been occupied in one form or the other During the last 35 years in particular the Vietnamese have been putting up an unremitting and unequal struggle against different kinds of imperialism, Japanese, French and finally American ' 'In the patriotic struggle against US aggression', said Ho Chi Minh in his Last Testament in 1969, 'we shall indeed have to undergo more difficulties and sacrifices, but we are sure to win total victory This is an absolute certainty ' Ho Chi Minh's prediction has turned out to be absolutely true

All this roused considerable misgivings in the minds of the people of America regarding the wisdom of the Government's policy The Government's answer was the forcible rescue of the American ship, Mayaguez, in the Cambodian waters To put it mildly, infinitely more force was used than was warranted by the situation Even the 15,000 lb bomb, the largest in the USA's arsenal, was dropped As Parasuram, the correspondent of the *Indian Express* in New York has said, the Mayaguez operation was played up as if it was a major operation against a superpower, instead of what it was, minor assault on a country which was still licking the wounds of war and struggling to find its feet One of Dr Kissinger's own colleagues is said to have exclaimed, 'It was a case of intimidating an ant and pretending that it was a tiger '

Yet the Mayaguez incident has had its intended effect on public opinion in the USA True, the US Government was compelled to

apologise to Thailand for having unauthorisedly used its bases there to mount its operation against Cambodia, but internally Mayaguez had a soporific, and even tonic, effect on public opinion Even the gradual revelation of the magnitude of American casualties does not seem to have made a difference The President's popularity has gone up He has become the tough guy who will stand no nonsense He used to trail behind Reagan as prospective candidate for the Presidential context After Mayaguez he has forged ahead He has even expressed the hope that after the brilliant exploit of Mayaguez, for which he took the prime credit, the meddlesome Congress would leave him alone 'The President,' said Haldeman, one of Nixon's principal advisers, 'is the government, the Congress is a bunch of clowns'

President Ford's advisers have not minced words in expounding the significance of Mayaguez Henceforward, said Dr Kissinger, the USA would follow a more 'abrasive' foreign policy In a statement which he made on 15th May he spoke repeatedly of the 'challenge', of the developing nations He rejected *in toto* all the proposals made at the Commonwealth Conference at Kingston for a redistribution of the world's income, even though these proposals had the support of the USA's own allies, the UK, Australia and New Zealand

Dr Kissinger has given a warning that even if the USA's abrasive policy is not supported by its allies, the USA was prepared to go it alone 'Our technology,' he said, 'our resources, our managerial genius and financial expertise and our leadership are unmatched without us there is no solution' This reminds one of the 19th century British doggeral which gave rise to the word, jingoism

We do not want to fight, but by jingo if we do,
We have the ships, we have the men and we have the money too

This uncompromising tone was also adopted by Moynihan, the new US Ambassador to the UN In an article in *Commentary*, he observed that it was time the USA got out of 'its super-sensitivity to the feelings of new nations' and ended 'its extra-ordinarily passive, even complacent attitude towards them' Referring to this article, a Latin American diplomat exclaimed that it was 'an American declaration of war on the Third World' The Third World and its friends—after all it, too, has friends—will doubtless take note of it and adjust their policies accordingly

(*Indian Express*, 1975)

44. Negotiation or Confrontation?

The question of the hour may be put as 'Negotiation or Confrontation?'

In the beginning of this decade it looked as if an era of confrontation had given way to an era of negotiation The cold war had given place to a detente among the Great Powers Dr Kissinger and Mr Brandt were recognised as its principal architects on the Western side, and both received the Nobel Prize for Peace And on the other side, Mr Brezhnev received the Lenin Prize for Peace

India sincerely welcomed this development Indeed, it saw in it a vindication, and extension, of its own policy of non-alignment It was happy that it had contributed, in however small a measure, to the alleviation of tensions between the Great Powers and the resolution of conflicts in such areas as Korea in the early fifties The detente among the Great Powers was therefore a development after India's own heart Only, it hoped that it would spread to the medium and small powers

India has been doing its best to remove the irritants in its own relations with the Great Powers Its relations with the USSR have been a model of the relations which should subsist between a Great Power and one not so great Mr Brezhnev's visit to India at the end of 1973 and the remarkable series of agreements concluded then showed clearly that it was the wish of the USSR, too, that the benefits of the detente between the Great Powers should extend to the other States as well With the USA, however, India's relations had seriously deteriorated, especially as a result of its 'tilt' towards Pakistan during the Bangladesh crisis

Almost the first step taken by Mrs Indira Gandhi after the Bangladesh war was to write a detailed letter to President Nixon, earnestly pleading for the establishment of better relations between India and the USA Despite the cold, not to say rude, response to the letter, India persisted in its efforts Mr T N Kaul, who had been Foreign Secretary, was posted as Ambassador to the USA He strained every nerve to establish a personal understanding with

Dr Kissinger on social and official levels, so much so that some Indian newspapers pooh-poohed his efforts as 'Tandoori diplomacy'

The hope that the USA would be animated by the spirit of the detente in its dealings with the third world has not been realised If the credit for bringing about the detente between the Great Powers goes largely to Dr Kissinger, the responsibility for the failure, or the refusal, to extend it to other States must also rest squarely with him

The improvement of our relations with the USA must continue to be one of the principal concerns of our foreign policy This can only be done by having a clear idea of what Dr Kissinger stands for and how he hopes to bring it about, for today he is dominating American policy and seeking, not altogether successfully, to dominate Western policy as decisively as John Foster Dulles did in the days of the cold war

In the book *Open Secret The Kissinger-Nixon Doctrine in Asia*, the authors, Brodine and Seldon, have said 'The pursuit of international stability—not the pursuit of peace—has been the central theme around which Kissinger has constructed his grand design in US foreign policy' Dr Kissinger's first book, *A World Restored*, dealt with Europe between 1812 and 1822 His idol was Metternich, who arrested the spread of the ideas of the French Revolution and thus restored what he would call peace and order, and what others would call reaction, in Europe in the 19th century No wonder, Mr Bhutto greeted Dr Kissinger effusively at a banquet in his honour during his last visit to Pakistan as 'the Metternich of the modern age' And Mr Bhutto is not alone in calling him thus

If Dr Kissinger's goal is stability, his motto for attaining it and defeating his opponents has been described by himself as 'graduated amounts of destruction' coupled with 'breathing spaces for diplomacy' This motto went into full operation in Vietnam The 'graduated amounts of destruction' rose to the paroxysm of the Christmas bombings of Hanoi in 1973, and they were punctuated by 'breathing spaces for diplomacy' The result was Peace Settlement of January, 1974 in Paris This settlement was hailed as a triumph for Dr Kissinger's diplomacy, and for this he was given the Nobel Prize for Peace Even at that time there were some observers who understood the true nature of this Settlement When Dr Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, the *New York Times* wrote an article called 'The Nobel Prize for War', and *Le Monde*, one of the world's leading newspapers, wrote an article 'What peace? What honour?' The settlement was hailed by President Nixon as 'Peace with

honour' "The meaning of the 'peace with honour', now revealed", wrote the *Manchester Guardian* in a recent issue, "strips Henry Kissinger of his own honour " In an article in the prestigious American magazine, *Foreign Policy*, Tad Szulc, a correspondent of the *New York Times*, has revealed the inner story behind the conclusion of the Paris Agreement how dubious were the methods adopted by Dr Kissinger and what different, and indeed contradictory, things he told the different parties, the North Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese, the Chinese and the Russians, in order to induce them to accept the Settlements in Paris

'The truly fascinating aspect of Dr Kissinger's secret peace talks', said Mr Tad Szulc, 'was his ability to develop completely distinct public and private negotiating positions and the manipulation of friend and foe alike ' Mr Szulc has pointed out that when the Settlement was being drafted the American side insisted on having a text 'with the maximum ambiguity of language', so much so that Mr George Aldrich, Deputy Legal Adviser, had to write a long essay, called 'Interpretation of the agreement ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam'

The Agreement did not end war or restore peace in Vietnam Nor did it prevent the ultimate victory of North Vietnam and the total defeat of American policy in Indo-China 'History', said Mr Adlai Stevenson, 'has stripped the policies of Dr Henry Kissinger of their pretensions to grandeur and his actions of their pretensions to success ' Dr Kissinger's initial reaction was to throw the blame on the Congress, but, said Mr Adlai Stevenson, 'It was not the Congress which tilted towards the now deposed butcher, Yahya Khan, and estranged the people of the world's largest democracy, India '

In the Middle East, too, the question of questions is whether the problem of oil will be solved by negotiation, or confrontation France has, on the whole, a distinct preference for the path of negotiation Recently it convened a tripartite Conference of the representatives of the principal oil-producing states, the oil-consuming states and the states of the Third World, who are the chief sufferers The Conference proved to be infructuous, because of the insistence of the USA that the Conference should deal solely with the oil problem and not, as most of the other states desired, with the problem of establishing a relation between the prices of oil and other natural resources exported by the developing countries and of the manufactured goods imported by the developed countries from the developing countries

Annoyed by the attitude of the US government, the President of

Venezuela published a statement, which reflected, by and large, the sentiments of the people in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America He said that he was taking the unusual course of publishing his statement in the form of an open letter to President Ford as a paid advertisement in the *New York Times* rather than through the customary diplomatic channels It was the developed countries, he said, which had been taking advantage of Latin America, Asia and Africa, and forcing them to buy their manufactured goods at ever higher prices That, he said, was the main reason for the world food crisis The economic confrontation, he asserted, was created by the major capitalistic powers What was needed was to work out in an international forum a balanced relationship between the raw materials produced by the developing countries and the manufactured goods of the developed countries

In the UN again, confrontation seems to be the order of the day A special session of the United Nations on the 'New Economic Order' was convened in April, 1974, to discuss how the earth's finite resources could be shared in an equitable manner A committee of 77 drafted 'A Declaration of Principles', 'A Programme of Action' and 'Special Emergency Measures', and this was duly adopted by the General Assembly Not a single member voted against it Nevertheless, soon after the session was over, the US representative said that 'it would be completely erroneous for anyone to suppose that because the USA has not formally voted against the conclusions, it has accepted them in toto', and that 'it would be not only idle but self deceiving to characterise the highly controversial conclusions as a plan of action'

The USA adopted the same non-cooperative attitude towards the 'Economic Charter' which was adopted by the United Nations in December, 1974, after negotiations extending over 30 months, affirming the right of the producing States to exercise sovereignty over their wealth and natural resources and regulating it No less than 120 States, including all the developing countries and all the Communist countries, voted for the Charter Only the so-called Rich Men's Club, consisting of the USA, the UK, West Germany, Denmark, Belgium and Luxemburg voted against it

There were also other bones of contention between the East and the West One was the decision of the General Assembly to give the status of observer to the Palestine Liberation Organisation and to honour its leader, Arafat, as Head of State Another was the decision of the Assembly not to recognise the credentials of the representative of South

Africa, in spite of the triple veto exercised by the USA, the UK and France on its expulsion from the UN

The outcome of USA's mounting irritation over the attitude of the developing countries in the UN is that the US representative has given a warning that the USA might be compelled to withdraw its aid to the UN, if it continued 'to indulge in bloc-voting' Yet for many years, it was the USA which had indulged bloc-voting in the UN with the support of the Latin American States and the Western Powers, when it commanded a clear majority in the UN Now, the UN consists of 132 States, of whom more than a hundred are developing countries All that has happened, said an Algerian spokesman, is 'that the developing countries have broken the supremacy of a certain group that used to roam the UN building like serene falcons in an uninhabited forest'.

Latterly the USA has taken a number of steps to befriend the racist regime of South Africa A substantial quantity of highly enriched uranium has been supplied by the USA to South Africa for its nuclear power plant The USA has also been pressing for the extension of NATO's responsibility to the Southern hemisphere Dr Donald Eason, the advocate of a more active anti-apartheid policy in the State Department, has been discharged by Dr Kissinger 'We would maintain public opposition to racial repression', said Dr Kissinger in a secret document published in the US press, 'but relax political isolation and economic restrictions on the white States' In other words, say one thing and do another

The attitude of the USA towards reactionary regimes such as those of South Africa and Spain has been a source of concern and annoyance to some of its own allies in NATO At the recent meeting of NATO in Brussels, the Dutch Foreign Minister threatened that Holland would quit NATO if the USA's proposals to choose a radar site in South Africa to monitor Soviet shipments and to include, in the NATO communique, a reference to Spain's contribution to Western defence, were to be accepted Public opinion in Holland, he said, would not stand for such dealings with Spain and South Africa

In the context of the meeting in Brussels, no less a paper than the *Times*, London, said 'The sad fact of the present situation is that the United States, in trying to shore up the military frontiers of its sphere of influence, has lost a great deal of its power to move men's minds and inspire people with the ideals of liberal democracy. In too many places this once revolutionary country has come to be identified with reaction and oppression.'

Dr Kissinger has said that in the future the US would follow a more 'abrasive policy' of which the Mayaguez incident is the *hors d'veurre*, and the Defence Secretary, Mr Schlesinger, has spelt it out with reference to the different regions in the world If there were to be another Arab embargo on the export of oil, he said, the USA would not hesitate to use all means, including military, for breaking it If North Korea were to attack South Korea, the USA would 'go for the heart of the opponent's power' As if the USA did not go for the heart of the opponent's power in North Vietnam! Human memory is short, but not so short as to forget the savage Christmas bombings of Hanoi in 1973 In the Middle East, said Schlesinger, the USA must 'hold the ring' because there is no one else 'who can stand up to the Soviet Union' In the Indian Ocean steps would be taken to enlarge the mighty American base at Diego Garcia, in the teeth of opposition from all the littoral States including Australia and New Zealand As for South East Asia, all that Mr Schlesinger could do was to try and widen the gulf between China and the USSR, wide enough as it already is in all conscience In Vietnam, he said, the USSR has gained and China has lost, hinting that there, too, the USA was ready to hold the ring The USA still regards itself as the world's policeman

On the whole, the era of detente between the Great Powers seems to be passing into an era of confrontation between some Great Powers, and in particular one Great Power, and the medium and small powers of Asia, Africa and Latin America This is frankly acknowledged in an article called 'The United States in Opposition', written in *Commentary* by Mr Moynihan, former American Ambassador to India and the new Permanent Representative of the USA to the UN That article, of which the American Jewish Committee has the copyright, has been printed, published and circulated by the US Information Service, New Delhi There, Mr Moynihan has taken note of the fact that the United States regularly finds itself in a minority (often a minority of one or two or at most a half-dozen) in an Assembly of 138 members He admits that 'we were frequently reduced to a voting bloc which, with variations, consisted of ourselves, Chile, and the Dominican Republic'

Hitherto, he said, the Americans were obsessed with 'the thought that if only we are more reasonable perhaps they will be But they do not grow reasonable ' Mr Moynihan says 'We are a minority We are outvoted This is neither an unprecedented nor an intolerable situation The question is what do we make of it '

Mr Moynihan's remedy is that the USA should now go openly into

opposition discarding out initial—not a little condescending—supersensitivity about the feelings of new nations The majority of these nations are the products of what Mr Moynihan calls 'the British Revolution'—a revolution 'which began in 1947 by the granting by socialist Britain of independence to socialist India', and was profoundly influenced by the socialist theories of the Fabian Society and the London School of Economics, headed by Harold Laski To Mr Moynihan, who believes that the Multi-national Corporation 'is arguably the most creative international institution of the twentieth century', socialism is the principal menace He says 'At the level of world affairs we have learned to deal with Communism Our task is now to learn to deal with socialism'

The USA has learnt to deal with Communism because it has no alternative It realises that the policy of confrontation with another nuclear power will be disastrous to the USA itself 'No conceivable acquisition of territory', Dr Kissinger said, 'not even the Soviet acquisition of Western Europe, could have affected the strategic balance as effectively as did the Soviet success in ending our atomic monopoly'

Once the USSR, and later China, discovered the atom bomb and then the hydrogen bomb, the policy of 'massive mobile retaliation' became obsolete; and the USA had no choice but to come to terms with them

No such consideration applies to the medium and small powers 'India', says Mr Moynihan, 'has now exploded a nuclear device That may well prove the most important event of the turbulent year, 1974'

President Ford has recently declared that the US government cannot give up its right to carry out the first nuclear strike or to wage a limited nuclear war

Experience, however, has shown that limited wars cannot remain limited The war in Vietnam was expected to be a limited war And yet the USA had to use an unlimited number of soldiers—half a million G Is—, incur unlimited expenditure—150 billion dollars—, and resort to unlimited bombing Similarly, a limited nuclear war too may not remain limited, after all the USA no longer has the monopoly of the atom bomb. And the result of an extended nuclear war may well be the destruction of civilisation

'There lies before us', said Bertrand Russell in the course of a famous broadcast 'if we choose continual progress in happiness, knowledge and wisdom Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? I appeal as a human being to human beings, remember your humanity, and forget the rest If you can do so,

the way lies opon to a new paradise, if you cannot, nothing lies before you but universal death'

For mankind the choice between negotiation and confrontation is essentially a choice between life and death There is little doubt that in spite of the sound and fury of diplomacy man's instinct for survival, if not his basic decency, will ultimately prevail, and he will prefer the path of negotiation to the path of confrontation which, in this nuclear age, can only mean 'universal death'.

(*Indian Express*, 1975)

45. The Old Order Changeth

During the last few weeks a number of historic events have taken place They can truly be called historic because they are milestones in the march of history They clearly show that 'the old order changeth', but there are not many signs of the old order freely 'yielding place to new'

Among the recent historic events, the most spectacular was the European Security Summit Conference held in Helsinki at the end of July It was attended by the Heads of State (other than the Pope and General Franco) of all the European States (other than Albania), and of Canada and the USA There has been no such glittering summit since the Congress of Vienna 160 years ago Its main outcome was a 30,000-word Declaration, prescribing a code of conduct for all the signatory States

The Declaration consists of four parts In the first part principles of peaceful coexistence roughly corresponding to our Panch Sheel are elaborated The second provides for greater economic, scientific and technical cooperation The third envisages increased human contacts, flow of information and cooperation in cultural and educational matters And the last deals with follow-up arrangements

The mere holding of the Conference was a triumph for the policy of detente, and the resounding Declaration was a masterpiece in the art of drafting It covers up widely different attitudes towards such fundamental matters as the nature of society and the relation between the individual and the state

Part III of the declaration is largely based on the hope, entertained by Westerners, that, as a result of the measures envisaged therein, Eastern Europe will one day become an open society *a la* America Eastern Europe has indeed moved away, as a result of its own internal compulsions, from the kind of closed society which it was in the days of Stalin, but it is unlikely ever to become the kind of open society which ours, for instance, used to be until the recent proclamation of Emergency. Nor is it conceivable that it will ever become open enough for the activities of the CIA, as Chile did, with lamentable results

The main outcome of the Summit Conference is that the new order which emerged out of the Revolution of the 1917, and the new post-war frontiers in central and eastern Europe, which are an extension of that order, have been recognised, at least to the extent of a commitment that force will not be used to change them. Large sections of opinion in the USA, however, seem still unreconciled to the new order 'Brezhnev', said the *New York Times*, 'has manoeuvred all the major leaders of Western Europe one by one into a commitment to sign a declaration symbolically ratifying the division of Germany and Europe and the Soviet Union's huge annexations of East European territory, including all the three independent Baltic States plus large chunks of Poland, Czechoslavakia and Rumania ' This view was echoed by Senator Roussulet who said that the Declaration 'would have a devastating effect on the free world, the repercussions of which will be felt for many years to come'

By and large, the third world has welcomed the latest developments in Europe In welcoming them, Mrs Indira Gandhi expressed the hope that the spirit of Helsinki would extend to the dealings of the participants with the third world as well

One country which has openly attacked the Helsinki Declaration is China. Both the *People's Daily*, the Chinese Communist paper, and *China News Agency*, the Chinese Government paper, have expressed the view that the only gainer at Helsinki was the USSR They said that the agreement reached at Helsinki would help the USSR to achieve its ambition to become 'the God of Europe' and enable it 'to spread its avaricious tentacles into Asia' This outburst merely shows the extent to which China is out of tune with world opinion, in spite of its admission to the world body, the United Nations It must be admitted, however, that the prolonged and totally unjustified exclusion of China from the UN is largely responsible for China's mental isolation

Another event which has also shown that history is on the march is the removal of the 11-year-old embargo imposed by the Organisation of American States at the instance of the USA on diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba Eight American States had already ignored the embargo, now the other eight, including the USA, have agreed to leave each member-State free to establish whatever relations it liked with Cuba The invasion of Cuba in 1961 having proved a fiasco and the repeated attempts to assassinate President Castro having failed, the only weapon which remained was the economic and political ostracism of Cuba That weapon, too, has now been withdrawn, because it served no useful purpose Despite the embargo

Cuba has managed to attain the highest living standards in Latin America, and it is the only Latin American country where there are no extremes of affluence and poverty

Still another significant event in recent weeks is the virtual demise of SEATO Known originally as the Manila Pact, it was set up by John Foster Dulles as a counterblast and an antidote to the Geneva Conference on Vietnam, where an arrangement for the peaceful reunification of Vietnam had been reached with the concurrence of China The Geneva spirit was reflected at a great banquet in the Kremlin in Moscow in honour of Premier Chou En-lai, who was on his way back to Peking, after representing Communist China at the first international conference in which it took part At that banquet I happened to be sitting at a table at which were present Prime Minister Bulganin, Premier Chou En-lai, the Ambassador of Sweden, who was the doyen of the diplomatic corps, the Ambassador of Indonesia and the Speaker of Finnish Parliament Chou En-lai was in his most expansive mood In proposing a toast, Chou En-lai said, 'here are three representatives of the West, namely, the British and Swedish Ambassadors, and the Speaker of the Finnish Parliament Here also are three representatives from Asia, namely, the Ambassadors of China, India and Indonesia In between these two regions, is the Soviet Union which belongs as much to Asia as to Europe' 'How wonderful it would be', he added, 'if all these countries could cooperate with one another!'

Chou En-lai's remarks reflected the general international mood, after the Geneva Conference which China also seemed to share There was, however, one person who was adamantly opposed to the Conference and the settlement reached there That was John Foster Dulles He left the Conference in a huff, refusing to shake hands with Chou En-lai, 'the man whose hands are stained with the blood of millions of innocent victims', and he exclaimed that 'the only division of Vietnam to which I would agree is one, shutting up the Communists in a room of about this side up north'

The South East Asia Organisation was essentially Dulles's brainchild It consisted of two South East Asian States proper, namely, Thailand and the Philippines, the other members being the USA, the UK, France (which for all practical purposes withdrew from the SEATO not long after it was formed), Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan which physically and culturally belongs, and claims to belong, more to West Asia than to South East Asia.

The great countries of South East Asia, India, Burma and In-

donesia declined to take part in the Manila Conference or to subscribe to SEATO Yet SEATO decided to cast its protective mantle over the whole region The USSR described SEATO as 'an aggressive bloc of Colonial Powers whose aim is to suppress the process of liberation in Asian countries' And Jawaharlal Nehru reflected on the 'oddity' of people who were bent on 'protecting' others, even when the others did not want protection and cried out against it

In fact SEATO proved to be a feeble instrument In the war in Indo-China it cut a sorry figure And in the Bangladesh war it was unable to go to the rescue of Pakistan, with the result that Pakistan withdrew from it soon after

On its formation in 1954, President Magsaysay of the Philippines had said that 'on the success of SEATO depends the peace of Asia for the next hundred years' Now, his successor having performed a pilgrimage to Peking and acclaimed Mao Tse-tung as 'the natural leader of the third world', moved a polite resolution patting SEATO on the back for having discharged its role 'commendably' and adding that it was time it was phased out—which meant wound up—in recognition of 'the new realities in Asia'

How little the new realities in Asia and the sentiments of Asian peoples are appreciated in some quarters was shown by another event, which took place at the same time as the other events mentioned in this article, namely, the approval given by the US Senate by a majority of 53 to 43 to the Diego Garcia project, in the teeth of opposition from all the littoral States of the Indian Ocean and in defiance of the resolutions passed by the United Nations The USA already had rights for refuelling, etc , in no less than 36 ports in 18 countries in the Indian Ocean region and that, if the objective of the extension of the Diego Garcia station was, as officially stated, to balance the Soviet facilities at Berbera in Somalia, such facilities already existed in Diego Garcia The intention is to convert the two-ocean navy of the USA into a three-ocean navy, and the Indian Ocean, instead of being a zone of peace, as the UN had designated it, would become a zone of confrontation, with potentially disastrous consequences to the peace of this region—and the world

Hitherto, the peace of the world used to be upheld by what was called the balance of mutual terror, a balance resulting from the possession, by both sides, of the nuclear weapon which, it was thought, might be fatal for civilisation to be used Now, even that hope is not available, for the US government has propounded a new concept of limited nuclear wars It professes to have discovered a new nuclear

weapon that can hit the target accurately causing 'zero collateral damage' It has resiled from the attitude, which, until recently had been maintained by every nuclear Power, that it will not resort to 'the first use' of the nuclear bomb As George C Wilson has said in a recent article in the *Washington Post*, the result of this attitude on the part of what he calls 'that hawkish triad', President Ford, Dr Kissinger and Mr Schlesinger, is that 'the unthinkable idea of using nuclear bombs has become thinkable'

I have just seen a letter in the *Indian Express* from Mr R V Raghava Rao regarding a previous article of mine called 'Negotiation or Confrontation?' Mr Rao says that he is pained to see that 'an eminent diplomat' like myself should have made a frontal attack on the USA at the beginning of its bicentenary year and given the impression that 'nothing good has ever come out of US policies at home and abroad'

That impression is not correct I have not dealt with US foreign policy As for US policies abroad, I do feel that US foreign policy during the post-war period, especially towards the third world—a policy which was begun in the days of the cold war by John Foster Dulles and continued, though for different reasons, by Dr Kissinger—has been unsympathetic, unimaginative and often self-defeating Why it has been so, I do not know Perhaps the explanation lies in President Eisenhower's remark that the US Government is under 'the domination of a military-industrial clique'

Whatever that may be, it was farthest from my thoughts to suggest that 'nothing good has ever come out of US policies at home or abroad' I have a high regard and admiration for the people of the USA, the contribution which they have made to the sum total of human progress and the men of vision and wisdom which the USA has thrown up from time to time But, to repeat what the London *Times* said in a leading article on the NATO Summit meeting at Brussels, 'the sad fact of the present situation is that the United States, in trying to shore up the military frontiers of its sphere of influence, has lost a great deal of its power to move men's minds and to inspire people with the ideals of liberal democracy In too many places this once revolutionary country has come to be identified with reaction and oppression'

On the whole, balancing the hopeful and the ominous events of the last few weeks, one may say that today, more than ever before, man is

Wandering betwixt two worlds
One dead, the other yet unborn

It depends on man himself whether the new world will be duly born or still-born, and whether the old order will realistically and gracefully yield place to the new, or whether it will go down in a nuclear holocaust, yielding place to total desolation

(Feature Unit, 1975)

46. An Alliance of Animus

One of the most noteworthy events in recent times in the international field is the development of the Sino-American axis To borrow a term used by Jawaharlal Nehru, it can be described as an alliance of animus

Nehru did not apply this term to the Sino-American axis, for it did not exist in his time, indeed at that time, China and America were at opposite poles It was another axis, the Sino-Pakistan axis, which he called an alliance of animus What he meant was that it was based on an animus against India, which China shared with Pakistan, and that it had no deeper roots

The animus of Pakistan against India is easily explained Pakistan arose out of the ambition of a section of Muslims, headed by the redoubtable politician, M A Jinnah, to set up an Islamic state of their own The fact that Jinnah was not exactly a devout Muslim and that he flouted some of the favourite Muslim taboos did not matter Nor did it matter that Jinnah, who now advocated the two-nation theory, was once an ardent Indian nationalist

'How primitive', said Josef Stalin to me when he saw me on the 17th February 1952, only a fortnight before his death, 'for a state to be founded on religion!' Not only was it primitive but it was unstable, as the emergence of the independent state of Bangladesh only too clearly showed What is left of Pakistan is still engaged in a search for identity All that binds Pakistan is an animus against India

China's animus against India is more complicated and more difficult to explain During the Second World War there was a great *rapprochement* between India and China Then memories of the two thousand-year friendship between India and China sprang into life In 1944, when I reached Urumchi after an overland journey from India to China, Gen Wu Chung-Hsin said 'In 642 A D our Chinese pilgrim, Hsuan-Tsang, went to India in search of the Buddhist scriptures, now, India has, in the person of Mr K P S Menon, returned the compliment which China paid to India 1,300 years ago' In fact, Hsuan-Tsang himself was returning the compliment which

MINISTRY
OF
EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS
CHINA
DIVISION

dozens of Indian pilgrims had paid to China in the early centuries of the Christian era when they took the message of the Buddha from India to China across the most formidable mountain trail in the world How this immemorial friendship turned sour is best explained side by side with another alliance of animus of more recent origin, namely the Sino-American axis

In the '50s, 'the unbreakable friendship' between the two Communist giants, Russia and China, was almost an axiom international life Once, the child of Mr Guha, who was a Secretary the Indian Embassy in Pakistan, was being taught a few Chinese words by his Chinese teacher She explained the word 'friend' and 'enemy' by saying that 'friend equals the Soviet Union' and 'enemy equals America' Now the wheel has come round full circle, 'enemy' now means the Soviet Union and 'friend' means America

Many a reason, historical, geographical, political, ideological and even racial, has been adduced for this *volte face* on the part of China Many Sinologists, however, would say that the basic reason lies in Chinese psychology From time immemorial, the Chinese have had a saying that 'there cannot be two suns in the sky', which means that there can be only one ruler over the universe, and that was the Celestial Emperor China was 'the Flowery Middle Kingdom' from which light emanated and spread to the outer regions, enveloped in darkness

For centuries China lived in a world of its own To the south were the impenetrable Himalayas, to the east was the illimitable sea, and to the west and the north-west was the impassable desert To the north China was vulnerable, but there it built the Great Wall, one of the seven Wonders of the World, to keep the 'barbarians' out Within these boundaries China built up a civilisation which endured for centuries It had no use for, nor did it even recognise, the existence of any other civilisation in the world. Outside China, all were 'foreign devils' or 'outer barbarians'.

When this brittle, albeit elegant, civilisation at last came into contact, and conflict with the West, scientific, aggressive and expansionist, it crumbled like a pack of cards China then discarded its pacifism once and for all and resurrected itself under the motto of Mao Tse-tung that 'power comes out of the barrel of a gun' But old memories remained, memories of the ages when China was the only sun in the sky By attacking India in 1962 China sought to demonstrate that China was the one sun on the Asian sky At the same time it drew near to Pakistan as a counterpoise to India

But China had to reckon with a more formidable rival, the Soviet Union It was not merely a regional rivalry but a universal rivalry, a rivalry for the leadership of the Communist world As long as Stalin lived, China was prepared to put up with 'the monolithic unity of the communist camp', headed by the Soviet Union In particular, China resented the decisions of the 20th Congress modifying some of the fundamental principles of Marxism, such as the proposition that war is inevitable, so as to bring Marxism into accord with the grim realities of the nuclear age Then, China struck out on a line of its own in the company of Albania with which, too, it has now parted company And China has been trying to find allies and supporters in the third world

But China, in prosecuting its feud with the USSR, needed stronger allies than the third world could provide Led by President Nixon and Mr Kissinger, the USA nearer to its side, China is doing everything possible to propitiate the most bellicose elements in its new-found ally, the USA

China has been contemptuous of the much-vaunted *détente* among the Great Powers in the early part of this decade It was opposed to the European Security Conference at Helsinki its only outcome, according to China, was to erect the Soviet Union as 'a God in Europe' It has been advising the NATO states to follow a more aggressive policy towards the USSR It has been putting its weight behind the former imperialistic powers, supported by the USA, in their attempts to stage a come-back in Africa, on the ground that otherwise the Soviet Union would gobble up Africa And contrary to the almost unanimous demand of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean and the resolutions passed in the UN it has been urging the USA to continue its activities and its bases in the Indian Ocean In other words, it has been encouraging the renewal of the cold war

Mr George Kennan, the distinguished American scholar, writer and diplomat, who probably knows Russia and the Russians better than any other man alive, has shown, in his book *The Cloud of Danger,* how groundless the Chinese apprehensions of Russian hegemony are His observations are all the more pertinent, for he was the author of the policy of 'containment', which advocated, soon after the Second World War, 'the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force' to the expansionism of the USSR But the situation has changed, and in Mr Kennan's opinion a Soviet invasion of Western Europe is 'too bizarre to be credible' As for Soviet bases here and there, Mr Kennan thinks that 'the USSR has nothing comparable to

the far-flung network of military and naval bases which the USA has maintained across the world for most of the time since world war II' As for Soviet 'meddling' in Africa, says Kennan, 'even if Angola is taken into account, Soviet efforts along this line would appear to be on a scale, hardly comparable to our own and no greater than those of China'

It is sad to think to what extent China has gone in pursuing its 'alliance of animus' against the USSR And the USA, especially after L Brzezinski's recent visit to China, appear to have decided to 'play the China card', which hitherto it had carefully concealed up its sleeve Indeed the American Ambassador in Tokyo is said to have exclaimed that the Chinese are 'our Cubans in Asia' But this is a role ill-suited to a country which for centuries, under the benign influence of Confucius, was in the forefront of civilisation Moreover the idea of *détente* is too deeply rooted in the minds and hearts of the peoples of the world, and too clearly answers to their sentiments and interests, to be blown out by the winds of the cold war which, fanned by the Sino-American alliance of animus, are again gathering momentum

PART IV

INDIA AND THE USSR

47. The Discovery of the USSR

The 21st June 1941, is a historic date in the annals of Europe—and not of Europe alone It was on that day at the crack of dawn that Hitler bounded his onslaught on Russia

It was a memorable date also in the evolution of Indo-Soviet relations Until then the Soviet Union was, to the majority of Indians, largely *terra incognita* There had been a veritable iron curtain between Russia and India, to the erection of which Great Britain had made its contribution True, Jawaharlal Nehru had visited Russia in 1927 and Rabindranath Tagore in 1930, and left appreciative accounts of Revolutionary Russia's progress, but their voices were drowned by the flood of anti-Soviet propaganda, let loose by Britain

The makers of propaganda are apt to be its victims They underrated even the military capacity of the USSR Indeed, the Chief of the British General Staff expressed his opinion that Hitler's armies would go through Russia 'like a knife through melted butter' The British military experts doubted whether Russia would be able to stand up to Hitler for more than six months What happened was exactly the reverse The Soviet Union was the first to break the myth of Hitler's invincibility

The magnitude of the Soviet war effort may be guaged by recalling a few statistics Three-fourths of Hitler's army was employed against the USSR, where not less than ten million German soldiers and officers fell Five hundred German divisions and a hundred divisions belonging to Germany's allies were destroyed in the Soviet Union as against 176 divisions accounted for by other Allied Forces President Roosevelt wrote in a letter dated 16th May, 1942, to General MacArthur that 'the Russian armies destroyed more enemy soldiers and material than all the twenty-five States of the Allies put together' It was the Russian army, said Churchill, which 'tore the guts out of the German war machine'

In India, despite Western propaganda, there was considerable sympathy for the Soviet Union from the outset, chiefly because the people instinctively felt that the Soviet Union was the arch enemy of

imperialism This was demonstrated by the almost automatic emergence of a society which called itself 'Friends of the Soviet Union', soon after the Soviet Union entered the war Dr L V Mitrokhin, a distinguished Soviet scholar-diplomat, has just published a book called *Friends of the Soviet Union*, dealing with the attitude of the Indian public towards the Second World War and, in particular, the Soviet war effort

In Indian eyes the Soviet Union's entry changed the basic character of the War Indians had been sceptical of such slogans as 'a war for freedom', 'a war to end war', and 'a war to make the world safe for democracy' These slogans had been current in the First World War, but in retrospect, that War was nothing but a war between rival imperialisms, or, as Sirdar K M Panikkar put it, 'a European civil war'

During the Second World War there was a tendency on the part of some people in India to gloat over the German victories on the principle that your enemy's enemy is your friend But, as Jawaharlal Nehru had realised much earlier, imperialism and fascism are 'twin brothers' Rabindranath Tagore knew it too he defined fascism as 'the religiously cultivated aggressive spirit of nationalism and imperialism it was impossible for the people to turn their faces away while an unholy fire was being fed with human sacrifices' Mahatma Gandhi was totally averse to war and violence in all its forms But Nehru pointed out to him what he regarded as 'the most perilous feature of the situation emerging in Europe', namely, 'the consolidation of the imperialist and fascist powers to fight Russia' He also pointed out how seriously Japan's entry into the war would affect the fortunes of Russia and China Gandhi was quick to grasp the point Acknowledging Nehru as 'my Guru in such matters', he said, 'I do not want the War to be the instrument of Russia's defeat nor of China's If that happens, I would hate myself'

The shift in Indian public opinion towards the War began almost immediately after Hitler's invasion of Russia The 22nd July 1941, was observed as an All India Day of Solidarity with the USSR and a Committee was formed, of which the patron was none other than Rabindranath Tagore and the Chairman was Dr Bhupen Datta, the brother of Swami Vivekananda In December 1941, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution expressing its admiration for 'the astonishing self-sacrifice and heroic courage of the Soviet people in defence of their country and their freedom', and conveying its 'warm sympathy' to the Soviet Union Great was the satisfaction in

India when the Soviet Union won the battle of Moscow in January 1942, in which fifty-two German divisions were employed and nine hundred thousand men were routed Even greater was the rejoicing when Hitler's 'Operation Barbarossa', aimed at the implementation of the 'Orient Plan' which had been devised by Hitler for marching into India through Afghanistan after Russia, had been disposed of No wonder Dr. Mitrokhin has referred to the year 1941 as 'the year of India's discovery of the USSR' of its strength, its cohesion, its unity, its indestructibility and its apostolic fervour in defending its system

In 1942 India faced fresh dangers All South-East Asia fell into Japanese hands and India became almost a front-line state Yet the British were in no mood to relax their hold on India Indeed, Winston Churchill had the temerity to observe that 'the Four Freedoms', so grandiloquently proclaimed by him and President Roosevelt, had no application to India and other British dependencies The Cripps mission to India failed As Mahatma Gandhi put it, the British offer conveyed through Sir Stafford Cripps was 'a post-dated cheque on a bank in liquidation' It was in those circumstances that the 'Quit India' resolution was passed on the 8th August 1942 But that very resolution expressed the hope that it would not injure the interests of the USSR and China, 'the maintenance of whose freedom was precious for the world' The general feeling in India was reflected in the Presidential Address of Mrs Sarojini Naidu at the Conference of the Friends of the Soviet Union, in 1942 She said that the Soviet Union had become 'a living banner and beacon of democracy'

As a result of the Soviet Union's performance, the word democracy itself began to have a wider meaning Sir Homi Mody, a conservative to his finger-tips, observed in the course of his Convocation Address at the Nagpur University in December 1943, that people used to think that Parliamentary democracy was 'the last word in political wisdom' But the Second World War had shown the world that 'human progress can be achieved under widely different systems Soldiers and civilians are fighting in Russia with a heroism and resourcefulness which have compelled the admiration of the world, and it cannot but be admitted that Russian resistance has given a rude shock to the almost universal conception of the Soviet system of Government Today it is heresy to talk of an international order without Russian collaboration Incidentally, the course of history would have been different, if the realisation of Russia's place in world polity had dawned on the great democracies a few years earlier '

Some of the most fascinating parts of Dr Mitrokhin's book relate

to his meetings not merely with writers, scientists and other intellectuals, but with ordinary people who had participated in the War He took the trouble of visiting the homes of some of the valiant survivors of the Second World War, who had been given awards for bravery by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR He also met an Indian, who was in a Nazi Concentration Camp, sharing the horrors of the Camp with Russian prisoners, who were treated more brutally than other prisoners The manner in which the Russian and Indian prisoners fraternised with one another was truly remarkable One of them told Dr Mitrokhin that 'some people wonder about the roots of Indo-Soviet friendship For myself, the origin of my friendly feelings for Russia began in the Concentration Camps in Germany'

Dr Mitrokhin has also given a vivid account of the heroism of one Noor-un-nissa, a descendant of Tippu Sultan, who met her death bravely by joining the resistance movement in France and received a high award from Gen De Gaulle himself, then President of the provisional government of France

To Dr Mitrokhin the writing of this book has been a labour of love "The idea of writing this book", he says in his introduction, "came to me about two years ago, when I was returning from a trip to Pithoragarh (UP) I went there to interview an old Indian soldier who during the Second World War was awarded the Soviet Order of the Red Star As the car moved along a mountainous road, curve by curve, Himalaya's peaks appeared and disappeared Somewhere to the north was my native country, the USSR, separated from India by thousands of miles but still it was very near This book, though written hastily and with many shortcomings, is a token of sincere love for the Indian people, and of gratitude for their whole-hearted support to the Soviet people during the crucial years of 1941-45 Every document I discovered in the course of the research for the book, filled my heart with pride for my country and great sympathy for India and often was I eager to say, paraphrasing Prof Hiren Mukerji, that 'India is my country' "

The Russians are a sentimental people and Dr Mitrokhin is no exception However, he has not allowed sentiment to affect the objectivity of this richly documented book At the same time he has captured the atmosphere of a thrilling period, from which India emerged as an independent state and the Soviet Union as an indubitably Great Power

(Feature Unit, 1977)

48 1917 And 1947: 'The Common Rhythm'

India will be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of its independence this year And the USSR will be celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Revolution which ushered it into existence In this sense both are newcomers to the comity of nations Even the name, the USSR, was unknown before the Revolution of 1917 In fact, it was only in 1922 that Russia christened itself the USSR and it was only in 1932 that it was recognised by the USA and admitted to the League of Nations

Present-day India, too, is very different from what it was before its own revolution of 1947 The 'Akhanda Hindustan' of fact and fancy has ceased to exist undivided and regarded as indivisible, India was divided into two in 1947 and into three in 1971 But what India lost in size, it gained in status It was no longer a mere jewel, albeit 'the brightest jewel in the British Crown' It was now a sovereign, independent state

As a result of the Revolution of 1917, the USSR, too, gained in status as compared with Tsarist Russia Not immediately or automatically, but eventually, and especially after the Second World War, it could not fail to be recognised as a Great Power, and, in fact, one of the two greatest

Before the Revolution, the general attitude of the world—and world opinion used to be manufactured largely in the West—was represented by Bismarck's description of Russia as 'a Colossus on feet of clay' Its very size, however, made it somewhat feared and gave rise to 'the Russian bogey', which was one of the cardinal factors of British foreign policy in the nineteenth century And the bogeyman looked all the more terrible when he put on the red cloak of Communism

The Western attitude towards India, too, was not very different India, was regarded as a sub-continent, which, it was thought, could never become a homogeneous state in the modern sense of the word India was not regarded as a Colossus on feet of clay, but that was because India did not stand on its own feet, but on the feet fabricated and fortified by the sinews of British imperialism

It is true that India, unlike the USSR, was a member of the League of Nations ever since its inception But that was largely a gesture of courtesy One has only to remember that the Indian delegation to the League of Nations was often led by the Aga Khan The Aga Khan was an estimable citizen of the world But what right His Highness had to represent resurgent India, the India of non-violent non-cooperation, of Gandhi and Nehru, it is difficult to see

1947 made a difference to all that, even as 1917 did to the position of Russia Soon after independence and, indeed, even before the formal advent of independence, as soon as the interim government was formed in September 1946, India proclaimed its intention to remain non-aligned in the cold war between the East and the West, which was beginning to grip the world Non-alignment was partly a modern version of President Jefferson's policy, 'freedom from entangling alliances' Essentially it was a declaration of India's independence, its determination to conduct itself as an independent entity in world affairs

For a long time the general tendency was to treat the Revolutions of 1917 and 1947 as independent of and, indeed, in cardinal respects, opposed to each other Theoreticians, and not theoreticians alone, on both sides were inclined to treat each Revolution as a unique and unprecedented event in world history, which pointed a new way to the liberation of mankind Indeed, the differences between the *modus operandi* of the two Revolutions and the temperaments of the men who launched them, summarised by such expressions as 'The Yogi and the Commissar', were there for all to see

Yet even in the early stages there were some precipient observers who recognised the affinity between the two movements One of them was Romain Rolland who said 'I wish to see in the fighting Communism of the USSR, and the Civil Disobedience Movement in India, organised and guided by Gandhi, the two great wings of one revolution I would express the hope that they would coordinate and regulate their common rythm '

To men like Winston Churchill, who scoffed at 'the foul buffoonery of communism', and President Poincaré, who spoke of 'that wilderness of Communism', Russia, it must have seemed sheer idealistic imbecility to talk of a 'common rhythm' between the October Revolution and India's struggle for independence Yet, as the years rolled by, the affinity between them began to manifest itself The affinity consisted in the fact that both Revolutions stood against exploitation Exploitation of one state, one people, one class, one caste, by

another in brief, the exploitation of man by man, whatever form it takes—social, political, economic or ecclesiastical It is this common rhythm which has found expression in the common stand of India and the USSR against the vestiges of imperialism, colonialism neocolonialism, racism and *apartheid*

The 'common rhythm', inherent in the Revolutions of 1917 and 1947, has shown itself in varying degrees in the relations of the Soviet Union not only with India, but with the countries of the so-called third world, and, in particular, in the support which the Soviet Union has extended to the demand of the newly-liberated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America for a new international economic order

President Carter's utterances during and soon after the elections had given rise to hope that there would be a greater sensitivity in the USA to the dire needs and aspirations of the people of the developing countries How far he will be able to carry out his intentions remains to be seen Mr Carter had expressed his desire that the Indian Ocean should be 'completely demilitarised' And yet it looks as if the mighty base, Diego Garcia, which has been almost unanimously objected to by the littoral states, and the other bases in the Indian Ocean, will be allowed to remain Mr Carter had expressed his genuine sympathy for the poor and his anxiety to take some steps to abolish poverty, but, as Mr Parasuram, correspondent of the *Indian Express* in Washington, has recently reported, 'such statements are not backed by dollars and cents' Mr Carter ordered a comprehensive review of all development assistance programmes with a view to a possible 'substantial increase' in aid levels, and yet the very modest proposal, requiring the developed countries to denote 0 07 per cent of their gross national product for official development programmes, has been rejected

The fact is that President Carter is faced with what his worthy predecessor, President Eisenhower, called 'the military-industrial complex' 'The USA', said President Eisenhower, 'is under the domination of this complex' There is no such complex in the USSR.

The new government of India is fully cognisant of the need for continuity in foreign policy As Prime Minister Morarji Desai pointed out, even in the most hotly contested elections ever held in India, foreign policy did not become an issue Indo-Soviet friendship, in particular, has stood the test of time 'Indo-Soviet friendship', said Mr Vajpayee, the new Foreign Minister, 'is too firmly rooted to be upset by the fate of an individual, the fortunes of a political party or even by a change of government' 'In the changing kaleidoscope of the international situation over the years,' he said, 'this friendship has remained a cons-

tant factor of peace and stability in Asia and the world ' Basically, the constancy of Indo-Soviet relations is accounted for by 'the common rhythm', underlying the Revolutions of 1917 and 1947

(*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 1978)

49. The Thirtieth Anniversary: Some Reminiscences

The thirtieth anniversary of Indian independence falls in August 1977 Even earlier, in April, came the thirtieth anniversary of another event, which was a corollary to Indian independence, viz , the agreement to exchange diplomatic representatives with the Soviet Union

There is a saying that old age begins when memories take the place of dreams In this article I shall recapture my memories of the steady unfolding of what thirty years ago was still a dream, Indo-Soviet friendship

I was present when Jawaharlal Nehru held his first Press Conference after he formed the interim Government of India on the 2nd September, 1946 There he proclaimed the policy of non-alignment, which was to become the kernel not only of India's foreign policy, but the policy of many states in Asia, Africa and Latin America

Having announced the decision to keep away from all power blocs, Nehru made a pointed reference to the two Great Powers with which India was anxious to be friendly and yet determined not to align itself with Nehru said 'We send our greetings to the people of the United States of America to whom destiny has given a major role in international affairs To that other great nation of the modern world, the Soviet Union, which also carries a vast responsibility for shaping world events, we send greetings '

At that time India had willy-nilly close relations with the United Kingdom, where it was represented by its High Commissioner With the USA and China too it had relations of a sort In Washington, and in Chungking, the war-time capital of China, India had an Agent-General—a tell-tale designation which gave away the fact that India was still a dependency and therefore not in a position to send full-fledged diplomatic representatives with the designation of Ambassador or Minister

I remember the embarrassment of having the title, Agent-General for India in China The Chinese knew agents—commercial agents a general grew on every Chinese bush But the term, Agent-General,

was mystifying to them When I reached Kashgar after an overland journey of nine weeks on foot and on horseback across the Himalayas, the Karakoramas and the Pamirs, a leading Chinese paper announced that an important Indian general had come to discuss military problems with the Chinese authorities One look at me, however, dispelled the illusion that there was anything martial about me!

With the USSR, unlike with China and the USA, India had had no official relations whatsoever prior to 1947 One of the first steps which Nehru took after he formed the interim Government of India was to seek the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union

In October 1946, when I was in New York as a member of the Indian Delegation to the First General Assembly of United Nations I got a telegram from Nehru instructing me, together with V K Krishna Menon, to proceed to Moscow and broach with the Soviet government the question of exchanging diplomatic representatives We mentioned this to Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister and Head of the Soviet Delegation to the General Assembly He invited the entire Indian delegation, headed by Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, to a banquet There, with wines and vodka flowing freely, a decision to exchange diplomatic representatives, for all practical purposes, was reached This made it unnecessary for us to visit Moscow in midwinter, in sub-zero temperature, with hardly any winter clothing The formal agreement to exchange diplomatic representatives was signed on the 13th April 1947

It must be admitted that for the first quinquennium after the agreement was signed Indo-Soviet relations made little headway For this both sides were responsible India, or at any rate Indian officialdom, had not yet got over the prejudice against the Soviet Union, generated by the flood of anti-Communist propaganda let loose by Great Britain On the other hand, the Soviet Union was passing through a dogmatic phase when it saw the world in terms of black and white, or, rather, red and not-red, i e, Communist and non-Communist India was regarded as ostensibly independent but still tied to the chariot-wheels of Western imperialism, though Soviet propaganda never went to the same extent as the Chinese, who once dubbed Nehru 'the hang-dog of British imperialism'

The Soviet Union soon got over its doubts regarding the reality of Indian independence In the Korean War, which broke out in 1950, India's policy of non-alignment had full play The essence of non-alignment is the capacity to ask not who is right but what is right Following this principle India, relying on such evidence as it had, voted in

favour of the American resolution declaring North Korea an aggressor in South Korea Later India voted against an American resolution declaring China as the aggressor in Korea, because it was General MacArthur's unauthorised crossing into North Korea and the march of his troops right up to the Sino-Korean frontier that provoked China to enter the war

In the discussions in the General Assembly, too, India took an entirely dispassionate attitude, with a single eye to the preservation of peace And it was a formula which India introduced in the General Assembly regarding the repatriation of prisoners of war which removed the last hurdle in the way of a cease-fire in Korea

The Korean War was one of the occasions when India's policy of non-alignment showed itself to be a positive factor for promoting world peace This was recognised and indeed appreciated by the Soviet Union, but unfortunately the USA continued to regard non-alignment, to use the words of John Foster Dulles, as 'short-sighted and immoral'

The exchange of visits by Indian and Soviet leaders in 1955 greatly stimulated the development of Indo-Soviet relations and their attitude towards world problems Nehru had visited the USSR nearly thirty years earlier, at the tenth Anniversary of the Great October Revolution He was then an 'agitator', the *enfant terrible* of Indian politics, now he visited the Soviet Union as the Prime Minister of independent India He was greatly impressed by the progress made by the Soviet Union, its dedication to peace and the steps it had taken to mitigate the rigours of the cold war

If Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union had a wholesome impact on him, the Soviet leaders' visit to India had an impact on their own thinking on fundamental problems It was soon after their visit to India that the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was held There it was declared, in modification of some of the fundamental principles of Marxism, that war is not inevitable, that violence is not essential for the transformation of society and that there can be different forms of socialism and different roads to socialism

At a dinner party given by me in our Embassy soon after the 20th Congress, one of the guests was Mr Blum, Minister of Luxembourg and the seniormost diplomat in Moscow He came in saying, 'Congratulations! Congratulations on the decisions of the 20th Congress ' I asked him why I should be congratulated on them 'Because', said Mr Blum, 'it is India which has opened the eyes to

the dangers of violence *Ex oriente lux'* Doubtless this was an exaggeration Yet the spectacle of India, moving, however slowly and haltingly, towards a socialistic pattern of society under the banner of non-violence must have produced an impression on the minds of Soviet leaders

Since then the Indo-Soviet friendship has moved forward steadily and almost majestically, and in 1971, it crystallised itself in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation In transforming India's colonial into a national economy, in laying its industrial foundations and developing a public sector, in preserving its territorial integrity and in seeking a new international economic order, the Soviet Union has been of invaluable assistance to India

It is a matter for satisfaction that the first non-Congress government of independent India should have freely acknowledged this fact and affirmed its intention of not only maintaining but further developing the friendship and cooperation between India and the Soviet Union

(Feature Unit, 1977)

50 Soviet-Indian Friendship Society

My thoughts go back to a cold January day in 1958, when the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society was born A number of outstanding men had assembled in an ornate room in what is now known as 'Friendship House', Moscow It was in this house that we had stayed on my arrival in Moscow as Ambassador in October 1952, and it was the residence of my predecessor, Dr Radhakrishnan We were not sorry for the Embassy to be moved from this building It had been built in a Portuguese style called neo-Manueli by one Morozov, a textile millionaire in the nineteenth century In India, however, Portuguese styles were not particularly popular in the fiftees when Goa was a burning issue

Morozov's mother had better taste than her son After completing the building, Morozov took his mother round, hoping she would compliment him on such a fine gem of architecture The grim old lady walked round the building in silence and said 'Until now, my boy, only I knew you to be a fool Now the whole world will know that you are a fool!'

The men who had assembled in the 'Friendship House', on the 24th of January, 1958, included scholars, historians and other intellectuals A unanimous decision was made amidst applause to form a Soviet-Indian Friendship Society Academician N V Tsitsin, the renowned scientist, of whom it has been said that he was a man who could make a desert bloom, was elected President He has been succeeded by Mr Nikolai Goldin, who was for many years the Chief Engineer of the Bhilai Steel Plant and is now Minister of Heavy Industry

In founding this Society, India can take the credit of having shown the way Six years earlier the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society had been formed in Bombay on the initiative of that farseeing, highminded and large-hearted man, Dr A V Baliga, who was elected its founder-President Soon after the formation of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, Dr Baliga called on me in Delhi I was at that time Foreign Secretary He also called on H V R Iyengar, the Home Secretary H V R and I compared our impressions regarding Dr Baliga 'A

good man', said H V R Iyengar cryptically, 'but bitten by the Soviet bug ' He did not know, nor did I, that a day would come when the 600 million people of India would be bitten by the Soviet bug and a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation would be concluded between India and the Soviet Union

The Indo-Soviet Cultural Society was founded in the fifth year of Indian independence, and the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society was founded two days before the eighth anniversary of Indian Republic Thus both the Societies were founded when India was still trying to find its way in the uncharted sea of independence

Indo-Russian friendship, however, was not a new phenomenon It nad deep roots How far back the roots stretched was shown by an event in which, too, I had the honour to participate, namely, the unveiling of the statue of Afanasi Nikitin, the redoubtable Russian traveller, who visited India fifty years before Vasco da Gama, and has left very vivid and very friendly accounts about the people among whom he stayed The Great October Revolution, of which both countries recently celebrated the 60th anniversary, and the advent of Indian independence, of which the 30th anniversary was celebrated in both the countries, gave a new dimension and a new glow to Indo-Soviet friendship

The primary object of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society was to promote understanding, friendship and cooperation between the two peoples In order to promote understanding the first step is to remove misunderstandings It must be admitted that there were many misunderstandings between India and the USSR during the British period largely as a result of presistent anti-Soviet propaganda Both the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society set themselves to remove the debris of misunderstanding which had accumulated, and these Societies can justifiably claim that they have done so with remarkable success

In this process personal contacts play a great part How great a part they could play was demonstrated in the case of Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Moscow on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Great October Revolution That visit had a formative influence on the mind of the man who was destined to lead India forward to the goal of a 'socialistic pattern of society' Another visit which also had an influence not only on the mind of the visitor but also on the attitude of his countrymen was the visit of Rabindranath Tagore to Moscow in 1930

Two swallows, however, do not make a spring, and hardly any

other swallows were permitted to visit the Soviet Union during the British period I myself was prevented from doing so in 1934 In that year we wished to visit many countries in Europe My wife's passport was endorsed, 'For all countries in Europe', mine was endorsed, 'For all countries in Europe, except the Soviet Union' It was not safe to allow the mind of a young Indian to be contaminated by Soviet influence!

With the advent of independence the spring-time of Indo-Soviet friendship came with a vengeance There has been a large and continuous exchange of writers, artistes, scientists, technicians and men from different walks of life For them it was inspiring to see how a backward, illiterate, superstitious, disease-ridden country had forged itself to the front as a great power in the brief span of a generation The Soviet-Indian Friendship Society has been sedulous in promoting such exchanges It has also been playing host to many transit travellers from India on their way to countries farther afield

Both the Societies have been celebrating historic anniversaries of common interest, stressing their significance not only for each other, but also for the entire world It was my good fortune to have been present both in India and in the USSR on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Great October Revolution, the centenary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi in 1969 and of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin in 1970 I was also present in Moscow during the sixtieth Anniversary of the Revolution in 1977, but alas! I had to content myself with watching the celebrations over the television set in my room in the Kuntsovo hospital in the suburbs of Moscow

The activities of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society are by no means confined to Moscow It has its branches throughout the country Moreover, almost every State in the USSR has its sister-State in India Thus the relations between the two peoples are being broadened all the time

While recalling the birth of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society, there comes to my mind the birth of another august body, at which too I assisted, namely, the United Nations at San Francisco, in 1945 I cannot help contrasting how differently these two organisations have functioned. Of course, it is not fair to compare them, because the operations of the United Nations are infinitely more complex Yet one cannot but be struck by the fact that while the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society has been fulfilling its objectives, the United Nations has lagged far behind its primary objective of ridding the world of the scare and scourge of war The scare of war, and

that a nuclear war, with its horrible potentialities is ever present, and the scourge of war has afflicted many parts of the world But the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society has gone forward serenely and majestically

Apart from its 21 branches, the Society has 350 Collective Members, representing thousands of Soviet people In fact, as Mr Brezhnev put it strikingly at a meeting, held in his honour in Delhi in 1973 under the auspices of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, 'The entire Soviet people form a Collective Member of the Society for Friendship with India' Thus the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society in the USSR, as well as its sister Society in India, has played a major part in giving Indo-Soviet friendship its special character of being a friendship of peoples and not merely of governments

(*Amity*, 1978)

51. The Englishman and the Russian

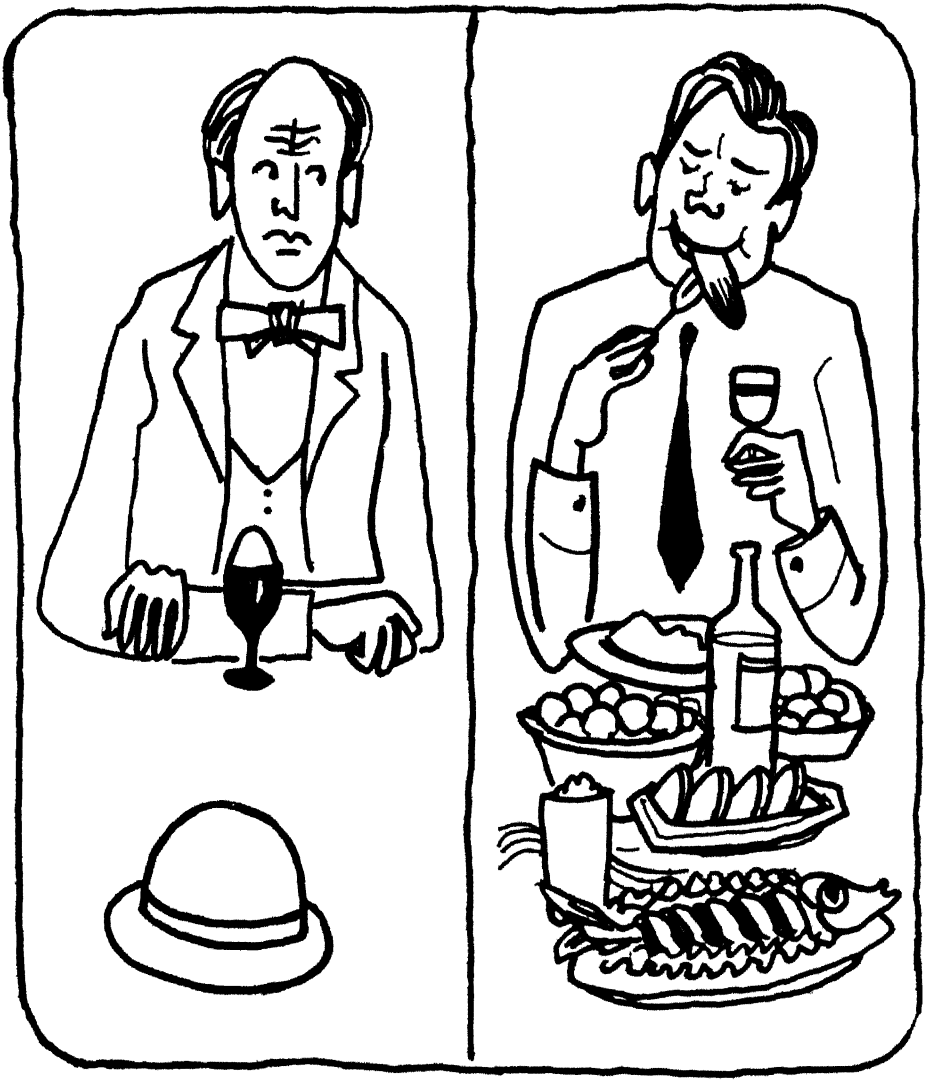
The two species of humanity, other than my own, who are best known to me are the Englishman and the Russian Englishmen I have known ever since I was a child I have known them as teachers, traders, professors, missionaries and administrators I have mixed and worked and played with them as students, civil servants and diplomatists I have lost touch with most of them, except a handful with whom I keep in touch through the English custom of exchanging Christmas cards and occasionally, as over Bangladesh and Vietnam, by indulging in amicably angry correspondence

I came to know the Russians much later in life The first Russian I set eyes on was in 1943 in Chungking, the war-time capital of China In 1952, I was appointed Ambassador in Moscow, and there I remained for nearly nine years Then I came to know the Russians more intimately, and my frequent visits to the Soviet Union as President of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society have enabled me to revive old friendships and to form new ones

'Within the four seas', said Confucius 2500 years ago, 'all men are brothers' Yet between brother Englishman and brother Russian there is a wide gulf I am not thinking of political and ideological differences, which are there for all to see and which have been stressed *ad nauseam*, but rather differences in habits, customs, manners and deportment It is on these that I shall dwell in this article After all it is not merely, or primarily, politics which makes the man New College, one of the oldest colleges of Oxford, founded in the 13th century, has a motto 'Manners Makyth Man'

Let us begin with food and drinks This seems justified, because man spends more years of his life in eating and drinking than in any other activity Once, Talleyrand, the famous French Foreign Minister, kept a guest waiting for an unconscionably long time when he was having lunch When his Secretary reminded him that his visitor was a V I P , Talleyrand said 'Let him wait What other pleasure is there which man can enjoy three times a day and each time lasts an hour?'

In respect of their dietary habits the Englishman and the Russian



have one thing in common Both are tea-drinkers Mankind can be divided into two classes, tea-drinkers and coffee-drinkers The Englishman and the Russian belong to the former category But there the resemblance stops Even their methods of drinking tea are different The Englishman drinks it with milk and sugar, the Russian, never with milk and often with a slice of lemon I myself compromise between both I drink tea in the English way in the morning and in the afternoon at tea-time, but in between I find the Russian way most refreshing Neither the Englishman nor the Russian drinks scented tea, mixed with lotus, roses or chrysanthemum as the once dainty Chinese used to do

One thing the Englishman and the Indian, who is addicted to English habits, have in common is bed tea Many of us find it impossible to get out of bed in the morning without a cup, or many cups, of tea In Russia this habit is unknown one cannot get bed tea for love or money, for the restaurants do not open before 8

Any irritation at not having had bed tea disappears at the sight of breakfast The Russian breakfast is a truly gorgeous affair, as compared with English breakfast, which Anglicized Indians also copy, and consists monotonously of cornflakes, eggs and toast In Kuntsevo Hospital on the outskirts of Moscow, where I underwent an operation, breakfast consisted of tvorak, i e powdered milk with sugar and sour cream, freshly cooked porridge instead of pre-fabricated cornflakes, eggs or a meat dish, cheese, sometimes caviare, salad, and bread, brown and white

Compared to the Englishman, the Russian is a big eater. There was a time when the Englishman too used to have hearty meals, as described in the diaries of Evelyn and Pepys, resulting in gout from which almost all British statesmen used to suffer in the 18th and 19th centuries When I was a student in England, too, more than half a century ago, the Englishman used to eat fairly well At my college at Oxford, Christ Church, we used to have a variety of dishes for breakfast smoked kippers, haddock, kidney on toast, fish kedgeree, etc That was more than half a century ago Now, I am told, these are seldom served Somehow the Englishman seems to have lost the relish for eating For this, the austerity practised during and after the two world wars, and fashion, which shows itself in a craze for slimming, are responsible

The Russian must eat more than the Englishman, for he needs more food to keep himself warm in the winter which is much longer and more rigorous 'The Russian climate', said Voltaire sarcastically

though not very accurately, 'consists of nine months of winter and three months of foul weather' I myself found the Russian summer glorious Russians, even the women, do not suffer from the passion for slimming Once a French visitor, in the course of his talk with Khrushchev, commented on the dimensions of middle-aged Russian women 'They are so sweet in their teens, but by the time they are thirty they are so corpulent Why do you allow them to get so fat?', said the Frenchman 'Because', said Khrushchev, 'we want our women to be women and not hollyhocks'

Until recently, in the absence of an adequate amount of meat and milk, the Russian had to stuff himself with large quantities of bread The present generation of Russians, however, is taking more nourishing food than at any previous time in Russian history He, and especially she, have become more figure-conscious too

It is not food alone which keeps the Russian warm, but drinks His national drink is vodka, which he affectionately calls 'the sunlight in the stomach' However, the idea that Russians are all addicted to vodka or that they are a nation of drunkards is incorrect Every now and then there is a 'campaign' against drunkenness, and measures are taken to discourage drinking in excess

The Russian is a hard drinker, but not indiscriminate. He shows his prowess on festive occasions and especially in the presence of foreigners when toast after toast is drunk to 'the eternal and indestructible friendship between our two countries' Unlike the English custom, where the toast is reserved to the end of the dinner, Russian dinner is punctuated with toasts from the beginning to the end, and with each toast goes down a glass of vodka, cognac, wine or champagne It has been said that in these days of cocktail parties it does not matter if a diplomat is not strong in the head, but he must be strong on the feet In Moscow, he must be strong in the liver too

Temperamentally, the Englishman and the Russian are very different The Englishman is, by nature, reserved, the Russian, gregarious It is the Englishman's reserve which sets him apart from his fellow-men In 1945 when I was at San Francisco to attend the UN Conference, I stayed in a suite in the 8th floor of Hotel Gotham Once the lift — or, as the Americans call it the elevator — failed, and I complained to the Manager of the Hotel He expressed his regrets and added that the previous occupant of my room, an Englishman, would not have minded, because he never used the lift and always climbed on foot the eight flights of stairs to his room When asked why he did not use the lift, the Englishman replied. 'Because I want to

avoid the sinister possibility of being spoken to by a stranger on the lift!"

An Englishman would not speak to a stranger unless he is properly introduced to him Two Englishmen might get into a train or tram or plane and sit side by side for hours without exchanging a word If one, more inquisitive than the other, were to ask where he is going and what for, he would feel inclined to say, 'mind your business' Being a gentleman, however, he would pretend to be deaf or feign a headache or profess to be immersed in thought or in a book, even though he might be holding the book upside down

Very different would be the behaviour of two Russians They would start talking at once, and before the journey is over each would know a great deal about the other's family, business, hobbies and ailments. Only, one subject they are unlikely to discuss, politics The Russian is content to leave high politics to the higher-ups The Russian takes no pleasure in holding forth on political problems or analysing the personality of their politicians or spreading any scandals associated with their names On the contrary, politics and politicians form the staple diet of conversation in the West, and especially in the USA, and increasingly in India too

Americans, and Indians too, have no compunction in washing their dirty linen in public Not so the Englishman Dirty linen, however, has to be washed, but in England it is done decorously and never in the presence of foreigners Towards 'the lesser breeds without the Law', the Englishman's reserve takes imperial overtones The average British administrator assumed that the only way of winning the respect of the 'natives' was to keep a stiff upper lip This was certainly not the attitude of all Britishers, and there were many honourable exceptions from A O Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress, to Charles Andrews, intimate friend of Tagore and Gandhi. In any case, the Englishman's cold reserve was infinitely preferable to the bitter bigotry of the Portugese and the promiscuous familiarity of the French, both of whom left their peoples in the colonies in a far worse plight than the English

The Englishman's reserve is not confined to foreigners but applies to his own people 'The Englishman's home', runs a characteristic English proverb, 'is his castle' It is guarded by an iron curtain of etiquette against the prying eyes of outsiders The notice, 'Not at home', does not mean that the Englishman is not physically at home, but that he is so happily at home that he does not want to be disturbed

To the Englishman, 'home' has a much more restricted connotation

than to the Russian or the Indian A home consists of the husband, the wife and the children and no other relations As soon as a son gets married he moves away from his parents and sets up a home of his own, to which the in-laws are not particularly welcome They may come very occasionally, after previous intimation, for a specific number of days, not to be exceeded on any account, but to come without notice and stay indefinitely is to commit a monstrous breach of etiquette

The Russian home is very different Invariably it includes a *dedushka* or *babushka*, that is, a grandfather or grandmother Never is a dedushka or babushka regarded as a nuisance or in the way of even a honeymoon couple Often they are regarded as venerable antiques to be treated with a mixture of love and reverence, and also amusement if they are given to the primitive habit of praying, making the sign of the Cross or going to church They are even welcome to take their grandchildren to the church, for the parents are confident that any religious germs, which might enter the spirits of the children, would soon be exorcised at school by a regular course of 'scientific-atheistic education'

The company of children and especially of grandchildren is a far greater solace to the old people of Russia than the cold comforts of Homes for the Aged in other countries Moreover, the old folk have a feeling that they are making themselves useful In Russia both men and women are employed, and when they go out to work it is the babushka who looks after the children, tells them stories and takes them out for an airing

In other countries, the position of the in-laws, and particularly of the mother-in-law, is very different Among the common people in India the son's respect for his mother amounts almost to awe, and the young wife often becomes a victim of the mother-in-law's tyranny. In Western countries, on the contrary, the meddling mother-in-law is an object of ridicule and repulsion When we visited Disneyland in Los Angeles we were taken on an imaginary voyage, in the course of which we encountered wild animals, cannibals and head-hunters, and when we were about to land after a number of hair-breadth escapes, the navigator said, to the huge merriment of the passengers, 'Ladies and Gentlemen! We have landed, and if your mother-in-law is still on board, you have lost your last chance!'

The Englishman's reserve extends not merely to the outer circle of his family but to its very core and even to his wife Here, one is on sacred ground on which no foreigner has the right or the opportunity

to tread So let an Englishman speak

I have recently been reading a fascinating book called *The Blood of the Britishman* by Anthony Glyn There he gives a vivid description of the Englishman's behaviour in bed The Englishman and his wife are always soberly dressed in bed, never undressed as amongst the Pathans I remember trying a case in the North West Frontier Province in which a husband killed his wife for her refusal to remove her clothes when getting into bed, and the Jirga, or the Council of Elders, held him not guilty

The Englishman dispenses with all preliminaries and approaches his wife with a single word, 'Tired?', and proceeds to perform the act with British efficiency This he does invariably at a fixed time on a fixed day of the week, usually Saturday night 'The sensitive traveller', says Anthony Glyn, 'standing on a quiet London Street at midnight on Saturday can almost feel the week's suppressed sexual build-up bursting all round him, he can almost hear the creaking of several million beds'

Anthony Glyn observes that to the Englishman, sport-loving to the tips of his fingers, sexual intercourse, too, is a form of sport, 'my best indoor sport', as he would say And sport must be played according to rules So the Englishman sticks to the same coital position and avoids all fanciful postures like those described in the *Kamasastra*

The full-blooded Russian's handling of his wife must be very different Pushkin, the greatest Russian poet, was a tempestuous lover, though his poetry is marked by a classical simplicity Though Pushkin had Abyssinian blood in his veins, there must be something of Pushkin, the lover, in all Russians, as there is in most mortals

It is in their attitude towards children that the Englishman and the Russian are poles apart Here, again, let Anthony Glyn be our witness In an English family discipline is the order of the day A favourite English proverb is 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' This saying was almost elevated into a gospel by Dr Arnold, who built up the public school system on the basis of corporal punishment, side by side with Latin, football and the Bible The child begins subconsciously to resent the harshness of the parents and this results in a lack of communication in the family circle, so much so that the family becomes, to use the title of one chapter in Glyn's book, the 'anti-family'

The Englishman, however, extends to animals the affection which he denies to children His love of animals, says Glyn, is 'an outlet for suppressed affection, something to fill the emotional hollow in the

British heart' When Englishmen came to know that the Russians had sent a dog into space in a sputnik knowing that the dog would not return, there was an upsurge of sorrow and anger and indignation among the British public, and even the sober *Times* broke out into an 'Ode to a Russian Dog'

In the *Blood of the Britishman* there is a chapter called 'Animals as Gods' If the author were to write a book on the *Blood of the Russian*, he might be tempted to write a chapter called 'Children as Gods' In Russia children are treated as gods, not to be tucked away in some inner recess or *sanctum sanctorum*, but to be brought out and exhibited for the inspection and admiration of friends and visitors

During the last six decades, the Russians have gone through terrible ordeals, revolution, counter-revolution, war, civil war and famine There were periods when they had to deny themselves some of the elementary necessities of life Yet, even at the worst moments care was taken to see that the children were not deprived of their amenities and even comforts, because they were the custodians of the future Children's creches, kindergartens, pioneer palaces, toy-shops and sanatoria are amongst the best in the world.

To an Englishman the love lavished on Russian children and the way in which they are petted and fondled by their parents and grandparents may seem cloying and unwholesome to the children themselves Russian children, however, grow up without any inhibitions whatsoever They do not suffer from a sense of alienation, they do not become misfits in society, and there is hardly any problem of juvenile delinquency Ralph Sohlman, the Swedish Ambassador to the Soviet Union, who was the doyen of the diplomatic corps in the '50s and '60s, used to say that nothing in the USSR impressed him more than the manner in which children were brought up and their demeanour towards foreigners, a charming blend of respect, wonder, familiarity and curiosity.

Yet even Russia cannot remain altogether unaffected by the winds that blow in this restless century Here and there one comes across young men and women who ape foreign fashions, crave for foreign exchange and question established values and standards The Russian authorities have a name for them They are called *nibonichos*, that is people who believe in neither God nor the devil, 'ni bog ni chort'. Articles and letters, condemning their conduct, appear in the papers, and the force of public opinion is brought to bear on them.

Public opinion in the USSR! the cynic, nurtured on American books and magazines, may exclaim Yes, there is such a thing as

public opinion in the USSR, though its scope and manner of expression are different Freedom of expression is not allowed to extend to the criticism of the basic political system in the USSR or the fundamental political philosophy behind it The conduct of the administration, however, can be, and often is, a target of criticism Nowadays one cannot open some newspapers in Russia without reading letters complaining of redtape, or official apathy, highhandedness or effrontery These letters receive careful attention at the hands of the authorities, unlike the letters which appear in a daily column in the *Statesman* called 'We have a grievance, Sir' The official is called upon for an explanation, an investigation is ordered and the results are published

This is sometimes called 'grass-roots democracy' Grass-roots democracy has come to stay in Russia, but it is wildly wishful thinking to hope that it will ever take the form of Parliamentary democracy, which is a little shaky, even in Britain which was its pioneer, or of Presidential democracy, as it is operated in the USA But there! I am entering the region of politics which I have tried to avoid

(*Caravan*, 1975)

52 From a Russian Hospital

August 30, 1972

I am in a hospital again, this time in Moscow Last week I was in the Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi, suffering—so Dr Goel's diagnosis went—from a kidney infection, a rectal boil and a sagging prostate gland In record time Dr Goel and his *guru*, Col R D Iyer, put me sufficiently right to undertake the journey to Moscow at the invitation of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society in the USSR There I participated in an International Seminar, which was attended by delegates from 79 countries, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of a historic event, the formation of the USSR After the Seminar I was advised to enter this Hospital for a check-up

Anujee has accompanied me She could not come with me as a wife, but only as a patient The Polyclinic in Moscow was hard put to it to discover some ailment from which they could conscientiously certify that she was suffering Anyhow, she was allowed to come, but she is not allowed to share my room, though there is a spare bed here She has to share a room with a Bulgarian, a heart patient On no account are husbands and wives permitted to occupy the same room

As soon as we entered the Hospital, we were decorously stripped of our clothes, lest any germs should enter its hallowed precincts, and each of us was supplied with a pair of pyjamas, dressing gowns and slippers We were stripped of our money too No cash is allowed to be taken into the rooms, it has to be deposited with the Cashier A formal receipt was given to us for both the clothes and the money

This is called 'The Central Clinical Hospital, Moscow' Why it is called 'Central' I do not know Actually it is situated on the outskirts of Moscow and is surrounded by woods which, in their autumn colours, gold and red and copper, are at their loveliest now

August 31, 1972

This morning I underwent a preliminary examination at the hands of the doctor to be in charge of me Her name is Tamara Konstantinova Amankulieva 'Rather a long name, isn't it?' she asked 'Not at

all,' I said 'Listen to mine Kumara Padmanabha Sivasankara Menon'

I cannot help comparing this Hospital with the Safdarjung Hospital That is situated in the heart of Delhi, this in the suburbs of Moscow That is surrounded by buildings, this by woods In the Delhi Hospital, the patients' ears are assailed by the ceaseless, variegated hootings of cars, lorries and buses, here, there is no sound except the twittering of birds The Safdarjung Hospital is enveloped in a haze of dust, here, not a speck of it is to be seen

September 1, 1972

During the last few days, my pulse, which normally beats between 72 and 78, has been racing up to a hundred This baffled the doctors at first, but now Tamara Konstantinovna has discovered the cause It is the reaction to the hormone injection given to me in the Polyclinic Together with the injection which was given to me a week earlier in the Safdarjung Hospital, this injection might have proved too strong My entire system seems to be bristling with harmones!

At about noon, the urologist examined me She, too, is a woman I felt sorry for her when she was probing into me for an organ which, mercifully, she herself—and womankind—does not possess, namely the prostate gland It was comforting to read in a Medical Journal that the prostate gland is 'one of nature's architectural errors' and that almost every male over fifty years of age is apt to suffer from an enlarged gland to a greater or less degree

September 2, 1972

In the evening I went for a walk in the woods I spotted a little lake and was disappointed that there were no swans as there are in the lovely sanatorium in the Crimea, Nizhniya Arianda, in which we are to stay next week However, there are fish which attacked a piece of bread that we threw into the lake as furiously as our Gnats attacked the Pakistani planes during the war, giving them what was called Gnat-mare

In the woods there are hundreds of meandering lanes, where one can easily lose one's way I myself lost my sense of direction and found myself in front of a strange building some distance away from the hospital I was taken by another foreigner, who knew little English and less Russian, to the room of a beautiful Cuban boy, and I was presented to him as his father, for whom he had been waiting I hastily denied the privilege of having fathered him and, after further explana-

tion, was duly escorted back to my room, in which Anujee had been as anxiously waiting for me as the Cuban lad for his father

September 3, 1972

It is Sunday and there is hardly any activity in the Hospital In fact, Saturday, too, is a non-working day Here, as elsewhere in Europe, the five-day week has come to stay, and the problem is how to train people to use leisure properly and not abuse it In Russia vodka is a great temptation, though measures are taken from time to time to discourage it

Sunday is the day for visitors Also, Wednesdays On no other days are they permitted They are allowed from 4 to 6 p m on these days, one patient can have no more than two visitors, and their names have to be communicated to the City Militia Department two days in advance

Today, Unni, my granddaughter, who has just come from India, wanted to visit me, but her name had not been given in advance However, I learnt that Damodaran, Minister in our Embassy, whose name had been given, would not be able to come So I asked Unni to come with Purushottam, Counsellor in our Embassy, as Miss Damodaran, which she did

Once I took a similar liberty with the Goddess in Kanyakumari There is a famous temple there, to which childless couples go and pray for a child The temple is open only to Hindus. We took with us two great friends of ours from Ceylon who were anxious to have a child, namely, Navaratnam Breckenridge and his wife, Aileen Navaratnam was a Christian and Aileen, a Buddhist But we passed them off as Hindus The Goddess forgave us for this harmless deception and blessed them with a child I hope the Soviet authorities will forgive us, too

September 4, 1972

The Hospital is spick and span. The staff has a passion for cleanliness There is an English saying that cleanliness is next to godliness, but here cleanliness comes first, and godliness, if at all, far down the ladder of virtues

In the Safdarjung Hospital a patient is almost invariably accompanied by his relations who stay with him in the Hospital as long as he is there In the overcrowded wards, one can see people sleeping on the beds, between the beds and under the beds This would be inconceivable here, it would strike the highly germ-conscious Russian as suicidal folly Yet I wonder whether in the Safdarjung Hospital the

percentage of deaths is much greater than in the more exclusive hospitals of Delhi Perhaps, the common man is more immune to germs than the more fastidious sections of society Even germs do not have the heart to hurt him!

September 5, 1972

Today, I was examined by Vera Petrovna, a distinguished surgeon She has ruled out our going to the Crimea on the 7th. She insists that I should not leave the Hospital until my rectal abscess is cured

This Hospital is truly a kingdom of women It is run entirely by them Or so it seems I have not yet come across a male doctor In the Soviet Union, 80% of the doctors are female

The nurses are all women They are very efficient Some would qualify for a prize in a beauty competition In the USSR, however, beauty competitions are taboo, they are regarded as part of the debasing commercialisation of sex, which goes on gaily elsewhere

September 6, 1972

Tamara Konstantinovna has taken pity on Anujee for being separated from her husband She has told her that she may spend the whole day with me, she could have spent the night too, but, she said, with a sigh, rules are rules So she advised Anujee to make a show of spending the night in her own room and remain with me for the rest of the time

In the meantime, Anujee has made friends with her room-mate The Bulgarian has left after having had two operations for the heart She gave Anujee detailed advice as to how she should use the commode, the women's urinal, etc As if Anujee had never known these! She listened very patiently and thanked the Bulgarian for her advice Presumably, some Orientals—there are quite a number in the Hospital—do not know how to use a western-style commode

The Bulgarian's bed in Anujee's room has now been taken by a woman from Guinea She and Anujee have no language in common; yet, with a few broken words in English, French and Russian they have been able to become friends

Here is a specimen of a conversation between them

Guinean: You have a man here?
Anujee What?
Guinean: Your man, votre mari
Anujee Yes, oui

Guinean You have pickinnies?
Anujee Yes, I have been to Peeking
Guinean No, no, pickinnies (and she showed a gesture denoting children)
Anujee Yes, six
Guinean Men or women?
Anujee Two men, four women And you?
Guinean Nine pickinnies and (looking up to the heavens) two go there
Anujee But, you look so young Where is your man?
Guinean In Guinea He is gubernator (Governor)

September 7, 1972

It is more than a week since we came to this Hospital How time flies without one doing anything at all! In fact, one is not allowed to do any kind of work, not even writing his diary, which I do on the sly

I have had no special treatment except some X-ray exposures for the boil, ten minutes every day But the real tonic is the peace and beauty of this place

The food is excellent It includes even that delicacy of delicacies, caviare Only one thing we miss, and that is the early morning tea, a custom which is unknown here So we decided to make the tea ourselves and asked Paul, an Embassy official, to buy two thermos flasks for us so that we could fill them with hot water the previous night and make tea ourselves the next morning

When I stayed in the Safdarjung Hospital, I found that the meals there, too, were, by Indian standards, good A commendable custom is the supply of excellent milk to all the patients One day, Anujee saw a boy taking the milk round in a huge barrel She took a glass and asked him how much it cost 'Cost!' the boy exclaimed contemptuously, 'Cost for this milk? Yeh Central Government ka doodh hai'

This evening I had an angry and, in retrospect, amusing telephone conversation When I was having dinner, a nurse came and told me that I was wanted on the phone I went to the phone and there ensued the following conversation

'KPS Menon speaking'
'Who?', asked the voice at the other end
'KPS Menon', I repeated
'Who are *you*?', asked the voice, irritated
'Who are *you*?', I retorted, equally irritated
'I want my wife', said the man at the other end

'Then, ring up your wife and not me', I said, and I was about to put down the phone when the voice said despairingly, 'I want my wife, Fatima'

The nurse, who had been overhearing our conversation, said 'Oh! He wants Fatima I thought he wanted Padma' She had called me thinking from my initial 'P', which stands for Padmanabha, that my pet name was Padma Every Russian has two or more names, one his familia which in my case would be Menon, and the other is imiya

September 8, 1972

Apart from the efficiency of the doctors and nurses, the two things which strike me most in the Hospital are its cleanliness and orderliness Here, the doctors and nurses do not have to rush about from one case to another In India, it is always a race against time, with time always the winner There is no paucity of doctors in the USSR, after all, one out of every four doctors in the world is a Soviet national The result is that there is an easy-going rhythm about life in this Hospital which has an almost curative effect on the minds of the patients

Though we are tucked away in this Hospital, far from Moscow, we are in constant touch with our Embassy Damodaran, the Minister, an invaluable link between different, and different types of, Ambassadors drawn from different professions — career diplomacy, Kashmir politics and high-class journalism — and Purushottam, the very able Counsellor, who started his service under me in Moscow, have been most helpful So has Ambassador Shelvankar, despite his preoccupation with an unending stream of delegations from India, of which the latest is one led by Tikki Kaul, Foreign Secretary

I understand that his talks in Moscow went off very well. Prime Minister Kosygin himself received the delegation and had a long talk with them India is reaping the fruits of the seed sown by Jawaharlal Nehru in the fifties I was in Moscow during the sowing season and am happy to see the golden harvest coming in

I am not, however, sure whether the habit of sending delegations in season and out of season is not overdone After all, we have an 'Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary' in all major capit is, nd to send a delegation to do a job which he, with his local contacts and local knowledge, can do equally well, if not better, is to impair the Ambassador's usefulness and prestige It also immobilises him. With one delegation after another descending on him, Ambassador Shelvankar is hardly able to stir out of Moscow

This devaluation of diplomats is a feature of our age, not merely in India but elsewhere, England being a distinguished exception It has reached its limit in the USA there Prof Kissinger has almost reduced Rogers, Secretary of State, to a pitiful nonentity It is possible that if professional diplomats had a greater say, the USA would not have cut such a sorry figure during the Bangladesh crisis and in Vietnam

September 10, 1972

This Hospital, or at any rate this wing, is a house of all nations I have never seen so many nationalities under one roof, except in the Lumumba University, where students from 84 countries are studying side by side with the Russians Here there are human beings of every colour, black and jet black, brown and light brown, white and cadaverously pale

Only, the yellow race is conspicuous by its absence Its sole representative is a Mongol who sits at the same table as Anujee My own meals are served in my room, Anujee goes to the dining-room and has greater opportunities for meeting the inmates of the Hospital

To the Mongol, African faces are highly intriguing, evidently he had never seen them before 'Why have they such funny hair?' he asked Anujee Anujee replied that she might as well ask why the Chinese and others have such slanting eyes The Mongol laughed heartily and said that big eyes and big noses are regarded as ugly by the Chinese And Anujee has both!

Among the foreigners is an Iraqi who prays six times a day This first amused and afterwards irritated his room-mate who complained to the authorities, and he was moved to another room When the table was being laid for lunch, an Italian tried half-jokingly to appropriate his neighbour's portion of caviare 'Nilzhiya takoi hooliganism' ('No such hooliganism is permitted'), said the waitress seriously and she put back the misappropriated caviare on the right plate

There is a South African who spent three years in New Delhi as wife of the first representative of the African National Congress in India She spoke notalgically of her days in India There are also two Indians, both Bengalis One went up to my wife and said 'You look Indian' 'I am Indian,' said Anujee, 'can't you make that out from my nose-ring' The other said 'There is a man in the Hospital who looks like K P S Menon' 'He is K P S Menon,' she replied, 'and he is my husband' One of the Indians had lost his memory for a time and is slowly regaining it The other had an occasional bleeding from the lungs which, too, has shown signs of improvement For dedicated and

often obscure men and women, coming from different parts of the world, this Hospital, situated in ideal surroundings and staffed with expert doctors and surgeons, is indeed a boon

September 11, 1972

Our stay in the Hospital is coming to an end My abscess is better, though it has not disappeared, the kidneys are functioning normally, and the prostate gland is less sluggish than before After a hectic year in India, full of incessant travel, a few days of perfect rest in this idyllic spot has done me a world of good So has it to Anujee She, too, feels refreshed, thanks to the lovely forest air, the walks in the woods, the nourishing food, the daily massage and injections of Vitamin B1

In a few hours we shall be leaving this 'Paradise of Countless Trees' There awaits us another, and an almost treeless paradise, the Crimea, with the sea on three sides and bare hills on the other, which have some substance that absorbs the moisture and makes the climate of the Crimea dry and bracing

(*Ten weeks later*)

November 24, 1972

On our return from the Crimea, I entered this Hospital again on October 17 and have been here ever since As usual, my wife has accompanied me though she has no special ailments to complain of This time they have allowed us to stay in the same room as a special privilege Kumaran, an MP from Kerala, and his wife are in this Hospital too, but they have to sleep in separate rooms But they are young, and we, being septuagenarians, have reached a stage when we can safely be put in the same room Or so they think

This time I am not in a mood to keep a daily diary Nature, which was enthralling in September, now leaves me cold In September, it was clad in the golden glory of autumn By October, the glory had faded The trees had begun to shed their leaves frantically, as if at the behest of the Spirit of Death which was commanding them to shed their earthly finery and join the Kingdom of the Dead 'The Paradise of Countless Trees' has before the 'Purgatory of Leafless Trees', waiting for their rebirth in the spring

I am no longer interested in the oddities of my fellow patients either. All my attention is concentrated on myself and the coming operation. A few days after I entered the Hospital, Vera Petrovna, the principal surgeon, told me that my abscess had penetrated inwards and needed

an operation Was I agreeable? she asked 'Yes,' I said, 'but is it major surgery?' 'An operation is an operation,' said Vera Petrovna cryptically

For a fortnight I was thoroughly examined to make sure that I could stand the operation No bride was more elaborately prepared for the altar than I for the operating table Every vital organ was tested and re-tested, X-rayed and re-X-rayed The blood, the urine and the faeces were examined dozens of times Even radiological tests were applied to ascertain the state of the kidney and the liver

On October 26, I was given a pain-killing injection and taken to the operation room which was the last word in cleanliness The operation began at 10 00 a m It was expected to last forty minutes, actually it took an hour and fifteen minutes and was performed under local anaesthesia I was perfectly conscious all the time and knew that something was being cut and scraped away in my body Occasionally I could hear Vera Petrovna saying 'Ochin trudna, ochin trudna' ('Very difficult, very difficult')

I spent my time watching the clock and seeing the minute hand and the second hand moving, and occasionally I recited a magic mantra which I had learnt from Anujee to be recited in moments of danger The last time I recited it so fervently was when I was crossing on horseback the hazardous passes, and on yakback the even more hazardous glaciers, of the Karakorams in the course of an overland journey from India to China

At 11 20 I was wheeled back into my room For the next three days I was allowed to take nothing but soup, tea and water The great endeavour of the doctors was to prevent me from having a motion for the first seven days, lest it should infect the operated portion

So the diet consisted of things which do not produce dross Bread, milk, meat and fruit were absolutely forbidden On the third day I was given a half-boiled egg, on the fifth an omlette made of the white of an egg, and on the sixth day, to my delight, I was given caviare, but to be eaten without bread or butter

In spite of all precautions, I had a loose motion on the third day Vera Petrovna was in despair This was the worst thing that could have happened, she said 'You are not responsible,' she went on, 'and we are not responsible This is God's work ' I thought that my state must be pretty serious for a Soviet citizen to have invoked God By God, however, she could have meant nothing more than providence (p not in capitals) Anyhow, her despair affected me too, but I remembered that cowards died many times before their death and

braced myself to die but once An array of specialists examined me and I was given injection after injection, including an intravenous one every day

By the 6th day, the worst was over On the 8th day I was allowed to get up from bed, on the 9th to take a few steps in my room, on the 10th, to go to the adjoining bathroom, and on the 11th day, to walk in the corridor On the 12th day I was allowed to go outdoors, though, in this sub-zero temperature and with ice forming on the paths, the woods were far from inviting

On the 8th day after the operation, the wound was opened and dressed by Vera Petrovna herself and on succeeding days by her brilliant colleague, Natalia Vassilovna They decided to keep me hospitalised not only until the wound was healed but until I had regained my strength and weight We have just been told that we may leave the Hospital next week

During our long days in the Hospital, the television in our room was a great stand-by That was so particularly during the festive days of the 55th anniversary of the Revolution While watching the military parade on November 7 on television, my thoughts went back to similar parades and processions on the nine anniversaries which I had watched from Red Square as India's representative in Moscow

The first of those was in 1952 at the 35th anniversary of the Revolution, when Josef Stalin made his last appearance The speech made by Marshal Grechko, the Head of the Soviet Armed Forces this year, was a pronounced contrast to the speeches in the early fifties, reflecting the intensity of the cold war This year, too, there were a few stray references to imperialism, but they sounded an almost routine exercise. This was not surprising because we are witnessing a great rapprochement between the Great Powers and the virtual dissolution of the cold war

While watching the military parade, I also recalled a curious incident which occurred in 1948 when I was Foreign Secretary K V Novikov, the Soviet Ambassador, came to see me and complained that a Soviet film showing the military parade in Red Square had been unjustifiably declared unfit for public exhibition by the Indian Board of Censors On inquiry, I found that the reason was that the Board felt that the film might unduly impress the Indian people with Russia's strength As if the victor of Stalingrad needed any such extraneous device for underlining its military might! I got in touch with H V R Iengar, the Home Secretary, and P C Chaudhury, the Information Secretary, and we decided to have a private view of the film, together

with our wives We were unanimous in holding that the reason for disallowing the film was flimsy and reported the matter to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and he unhesitatingly ordered that the film be shown

Those were the days when in the hang-over from the British period, we were inclined to view the Soviet Union through Western eyes There were some notable exceptions like Jawaharlal Nehru, but even he would not have foreseen that a day would come when two Great Powers, and many not-so-great, would range themselves against India in the grimmest ordeal which it had had to face since independence, and that India would have to rely on the support of the USSR and conclude with it a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

On November 7, all the foreign patients in this Hospital decided to meet in the afternoon to felicitate our hosts on their National Day We found that we hailed from 18 different countries, namely, Bangladesh, Ceylon, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, France, Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iraq, Mongolia, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Sweden, Syria, Uruguay and Vietnam

From India, there were a handful, including Kumaran, M P , who was treated for an ailment of the heart and is now resting in a sanatorium in Sochi, and Kalyanasundaram, Secretary of the CPI in Tamil Nadu, who came with a multitude of diseases and has gone back sufficiently cured to lead a procession against the ruling DMK party in the company of M G Ramachandran, the famous film star and dissident leader of the new-founded Anna DMK From Ceylon has come, among others, a very distinguished writer, Dr Martin Wickramasinghe, an octogenarian, and his wife The Indian and Ceylonese contingents, however, were outnumbered by the patients from Bangladesh, most of whom were suffering from the strain of the terrible ordeal through which they and their country had passed Among them was Muzzaffar Ahmed, President of the National Awami Party, accompanied by his wife and his daughter, who underwent a successful operation for stone in the bladder For them all, and indeed for us too, the stay in this superb Hospital was not merely curative, but recuperative, for the mind as well as for the body

(*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 1973)

53. The Role of Soviet Women

The United Nations has declared 1975 as the International Women's Year My thoughts go back to the San Francisco Conference in 1945, where the United Nations was born, and I, as Chief Adviser to the Indian Delegation, acted as one of the minor midwives At the Conference there were so many proposals for incorporating women's rights into the Charter of the UN that Dr Evatt, the Australian Foreign Minister, exclaimed that at this rate the time would soon come when special provision would have to be made for men's rights

At about that time a newspaper correspondent met Winston Churchill and asked him what in his opinion was the future role of women 'Sir', said Churchill, 'I trust that the role of women will continue to be what it has always been since the days of Adam and Eve' Churchill, however, was a fossil, albeit a magnificent fossil, from a bygone age His attitude towards women was much the same as his attitude towards the empire, summed up in his exclamation, 'What we have, we hold'

How different Churchill, with all his brilliance, was from his great contemporaries who have helped to bring a new world into existence in the 20th century Mahatma Gandhi must be reckoned as one of the great liberators of women. 'I am uncompromising', he said, 'in the matter of women's rights In my opinion they should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man I should treat daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality Women must have votes and an equal legal status But the problem does not end there It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation' Mahatma Gandhi was as good as his word It was he who drew thousands of women from their cloistered homes into the struggle for independence

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the architect of the Great October Revolution, was also a staunch believer in the equality of man and woman One of the first decrees issued by him affirmed the equality of men and women Jawaharlal Nehru, too, did a great deal to remove the inequality between men and women When a foreign correspondent

asked him what was the achievement of which he was most proud, he replied, the Hindu Code Under this Code the Hindu woman was placed on a footing of equality with the man in the eye of the law

In Russia, too, the position of women before the Revolution of 1917 was most unenviable In the Central Asian States purdah was in vogue and polygamy was rampant Today the Soviet woman stands shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet man in every sector of nation-building In the USSR 92 5 per cent of all able-bodied women are employed How different from India where only 11 86 per cent of the women are employed—and that mostly in unskilled work!

It may be asked whether Soviet women, in competing with men, are not taking the bread out of the men's mouths But in the Soviet Union there is no unemployment In fact, out of 59 million families the wife earns more than the husband in 14 million families Thus, in 23 per cent of Soviet families the woman is the principal bread-winner

The Soviet Union recognises that some kinds of work are not congenial to the fair sex Out of 1,175 different kinds of work women are employed in 975 In some fields they are preponderant Eighty per cent of the doctors are women They also account for 60 per cent of the office workers and 50 per cent of the scientists In Tsarist Russia 55 per cent of the women were household servants, 25 per cent were engaged in farm work and only 4 per cent in the fields of education and public health

The principle that there should be equal remuneration for men and women for doing the same kind of work is fully implemented in the Soviet Union This is in accordance with an ILO Convention for equal remuneration and non-discrimination vis-a-vis women It is interesting to see how far this Convention is observed in practice Switzerland has refused to accept it, it is a part of its national policy not to give equal pay to men and women France, on the contrary, has not only adopted the Convention but prescribed penalties for its non-observance In the UK there is the Equal Pay Act, and in the USA there is partial legislation to ensure equal pay in some branches In Japan there is legislation on equal pay, but ways are often found for dispensing with women's services on some pretext or other In India there is a constitutional guarantee for the equality of women Women, however, are very inadequately represented in managerial and executive positions, and there is still considerable disparity in the wages of men and women on the tea estates, in the cashew and coir industries and in the circus and films

The fact is that old prejudices die hard There are various myths

regarding the capability of women A study called *The Myth and the Reality*, published by the Women's Bureau of the US Department of Labour, has mentioned some long-standing myths For instance, it is argued that the woman's place is in the home, that she should stick to woman's jobs and not compete for man's, and that the employment of mothers leads to juvenile delinquency No country has more effectively disposed of these myths than the USSR

The role which the woman necessarily has to play as mother, however, is fully taken into account in the USSR When pregnant a woman is entitled to 112 days' maternity leave on full pay There are thousands of nurseries and kindergarten schools where working women can leave their children They have to bear only 20 per cent of the expenditure, the rest is borne by the State

The Soviet Union also recognises that owing to child bearing, etc , women are apt to age sooner than men Therefore, it is provided that while men can retire on full pension only at the age of 55 or after 25 years' service, women may retire on full pension at the age of 50 or after 20 years' service And a woman with 5 or more children can retire on full pension after 15 years' service

In the Soviet Union there is no need for birth control On the contrary large families are encouraged After all the Soviet Union lost 20 million men during the Second World War Consequently there arose a serious disproportion between the number of men and women When I was in the USSR in the fifties, there were 5 women of marriageable age against 3 men Truly a man's world!

The progress of woman in the Central Asian Republics, some of which were before the Revolution, not merely in a feudal, but pastoral stage of development, can only be called a miracle Before the Revolution the number of educated women, especially in the rural areas of these Republics, could be counted on the fingers of one's hands Now literacy is universal For this the credit must go primarily to Lenin who in 1919 established an 'Extraordinary Commission for the Removal of Illiteracy' and saw to it that illiteracy was removed in the course of a generation

It was this aspect which impressed Rabindranath Tagore most when he visited the Soviet Union in 1930 'Throughout the ages', he said, 'the majority of people have been beasts of burden who have had no time to become men They are like the lampstand bearing the lamp of civilisation on their heads, people above receive light, while they themselves are smeared with the trickling oil ' After the Revolution of 1917, said Tagore, an effort was made for the first time in history to il-

lumine the entire lamp of society It was this passage in Tagore's *Letters from Russia*, which induced me to call one of my books, *The Lamp and the Lampstand*

(Feature Unit, 1975)

54. Soviet Foreign Policy

No country can afford to practise a constant, unchanging foreign policy Policy has to be adjusted to the prevailing circumstances, and these are always changing To search for the essential nature of a country's foreign policy may therefore seem a wild-goose chase

Yet foreign policy generally has certain permanent, or semi-permanent features These are the product of geography, history and, in recent times, ideology Until ideology came to the scene, it was acknowledged that the one supreme goal of foreign policy was the national interest This view found emphatic, albeit cynical, expression in Lord Palmerston's well-known dictum that 'England has no permanent friends or permanent enemies She has only permanent interests'

Let us see how Soviet foreign policy has been influenced by the three factors, geography, history and ideology The Soviet, as distinct from Russian, part of its policy revolves round its ideology, and is derived from the Great October Revolution, of which Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was the architect. However, geography and history have continued to influence Soviet policy, despite the fact that revolutionary Russia defiantly reversed the foreign policy of Tsarist Russia in many important respects

The paramount feature of Russian foreign policy has been a search for security For this, geography is largely responsible It has been said that if one were to stand in Moscow and throw a stone eastwards it would go on rolling until it fell into the Pacific Ocean the vast Russian plain is so flat that there is nothing to stop it For centuries Russia had no natural frontiers, and it had to go on expanding until it got them The great march through Siberia began in the 16th century and did not stop until Russia reached the Pacific Ocean and annexed Alaska, which an impecunious Tsar eventually sold to the USA for 7 million dollars

Russia went on expanding to the south until it reached the Black Sea and the Caspian It also marched into Central Asia, overthrowing the decadent Khanates, Khiva, Merv and Bokhara, until it reached the Pamirs and the Tien Shan, or the Heavenly Mountains, separating Russia from China.

Russia's main problem of security lay in the west There Russia had, and still has, no natural frontiers There it was confronted by a number of strong, well-armed, nationalist States which were not only determined to resist Russia's inroads, if any, but were often tempted to make inroads into Russia Three times, 'Holy Moscow' was itself in danger For two years, from 1612 to 1614, that holy of holies, the Kremlin, was occupied by Polish invaders, and the liberation of Moscow from Poland forms the subject matter of a great national opera, Ivan Susanin Two centuries later Napoleon marched into Moscow Standing on Sparrow Hill, now renamed Lenin Hill, on which the 36-storeyed Lenin University is situated, and looking across the Moscow river at the great churches and cathedrals and palaces and museums of Moscow, Napoleon exclaimed 'All this is mine!' And in 1941 Hitler's hordes marched right up to the gates of Moscow All this has burnt itself into the Russian mind and intensified its sense of insecurity

Lately, however, this problem has been almost solved To the west of the Soviet Union there is now a belt of States, a *cordon sanitaire*, comprising Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Rumania which, like the USSR itself, have resurrected themselves through communism and are wedded to Moscow not merely by ideological but by strong economic and political ties Beyond them is East Germany which has now won international recognition, and beyond it is Western Europe, which has at last participated in a Conference of European security and cooperation, which the Soviet Union had been advocating for more than a decade

While the danger in the West has receded, a new menace has appeared in the East in the form of China which has come to regard the USSR as its Enemy No 1 This has again roused a sense of insecurity in the Russian mind, but it is coupled with a sense of supreme self-confidence The USSR knows that, subject to its horror of war especially in a nuclear age, it can, if the worst comes to the worst, take China on and knock it out

If geography has been responsible for a sense of insecurity, history has been responsible for a sense of inferiority vis-a-vis the West, which, as it often does, sometimes took the form of a superiority complex In the 6th century there occurred a great schism in Europe when Russia embraced the Christianity of Constantinopole and thus went outside the pale of Christendom ruled by the Pope. The alienation of Russia was completed by the invasion of the Tartars who subjugated Russia in the 13th and 14th centuries In the 15th century Ivan The

Terrible rescued Russia from the Tartars and other powerful enemies such as the Germans, but in the two succeeding decades Western Europe forged ahead under the impact of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the great navigational discoveries which eventually led to western dominance over all Asia and Africa In the beginning of the 18th century, however, Peter The Great tried to modernise Russia and, defeating Sweden, then a great military power, at the battle of Poltava, established Russia as one of the great powers of Europe But, Russia again fell behind in the race when the rest of Europe marched forward under the impetus of the Industrial Revolution On the eve of the great October Revolution Russia was still a backward State, which ranked sixth among the industrialised nations of Europe

The great achievement of the Revolution was that within a quarter of a century Russia became the first great industrialised State in Europe and the second in the world and was sufficiently strong to take on Hitler almost unaided, until the Second Front was launched The USSR no longer suffers from a sense of inferiority No longer need it, or will it, indulge in those gimmicks to which a nation suffering from a sense of inferiority has to resort

Apart from history and geography, another factor which has influenced Soviet foreign policy is ideology It is during the Great October Revolution that ideology made its first striking appearance on the scene under the auspices of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin Lenin, however, would not allow revolutionary fervour to override the national interest or endanger international peace Nor would he allow it to destroy the prospect of peaceful coexistence between States following different social systems

The principles of peaceful coexistence were expounded by the Soviet representative at the very first international conference which Russia attended after the Revolution, namely, the Genoa Conference of 1921 There Chicherin made the following declaration

'Whilst remaining faithful to Communist principles the Russian delegation recognises that in the present epoch, which permits of the parallel existence of the old and the new nascent social systems, economic cooperation between the States representing these two systems of ownership is imperatively necessary for general economic reconstruction In consequence, the Russian government attaches great importance to the first point of the Cannes resolution, which deals with reciprocal recognition of the different systems of ownership and the different political and economic systems actually existing in various countries. The Russian delegation has come here not with the

intention of propagating its own theoretical views but in order to engage in business-like relations with the Governments and with industrial and commercial circles in all countries on the basis of reciprocity, equality and unconditional recognition'

The USSR has recently concluded a series of important agreements with the USA In doing so, the Soviet Government was acting fully in accordance with the spirit of the above declaration The Soviet stand on coexistence has also been vindicated by the recent dramatic developments in Central Europe, culminating the admission of both Germanys to the United Nations

An essential element of Soviet foreign policy has been its anti-imperialism In fact the very first decree issued by Lenin related to self-determination President Wilson proclaimed it, too, but in practice its scope was restricted to Europe Why, as late as 1943, Winston Churchill declared that the Four Freedoms, incorporated in the Atlantic Charter, had no relevance to colonies and dependencies Lenin's definition of self-determination, on the contrary, rose above all racial and geographical boundaries

The Soviet Union has extended its sympathy and, wherever possible, its support to the peoples' struggle for national liberation The latest instance is the support extended by the Soviet Government to the people of Bangladesh during their heroic struggle in 1971

The Soviet Government has extended its sympathy not only in the struggle for attaining freedom but, what is often more difficult, for consolidating it Here, again, it was Lenin who set the goal of Soviet policy In his instructions to the first Soviet Ambassadors to Iran and Afghanistan, he said 'Our eastern policy remains diametrically opposed to that of the imperialist countries In our policy we strive to promote the independent economic and political development of the eastern peoples and shall do everything in our power to support them in this Our role and our mission is to be neutral and disinterested friends and allies of the peoples struggling for a completely independent economic and political development'

Out of these words, uttered fifty years ago, has risen that milestone in our own country's march towards 'a completely independent, political and economic development', the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

(Feature Unit, 1973.)

55. The Treaty and the Detente

August 9 marks the second anniversary of the Indo-Soviet Treaty Human memory is short and one is apt to forget the circumstances under which the Treaty was signed Ignoring the almost cent per cent verdict of the electorate of East Bengal in favour of the Awami League, headed by the charismatic Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in the first general elections in the history of Pakistan, President Yahya Khan launched an orgy of repression in the spring of 1971 As a result, some 3 million people were killed, 300,000 women were assaulted and raped, and 10 million people were driven to take refuge in India, to the serious detriment of India's delicate economy At the same time, President Yahya Khan threatened India with 'total war' and boasted that 'we are not alone'

Before long, we showed that we were not alone either On the 9th of August 1971, we signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation The news of this Treaty was welcomed throughout the country and there was an almost audible sigh of relief when the news was announced in Parliament For one brief hour, even the Opposition in Parliament forgot that it was its business to oppose!

This mood, however, did not last long Anti-Soviet elements began to have second thoughts, and the Treaty began to be criticised and even denounced It is instructive, albeit amusing, to recall some of the charges levelled against the Government for concluding the Treaty

It was asserted that this was 'an unequal Treaty' The term, unequal, in the context of treaties, has a historic significance Those are regarded as unequal treaties which Great Britain and other imperialist powers forced China to sign at the point of the sword in the course of their gunboat diplomacy in the 18th and 19th centuries There is nothing in common between those treaties and the Indo-Soviet Treaty which was freely negotiated

Another criticism was that the Treaty would not be of much use to India in helping Bangladesh Some went even further and argued that the Treaty was a positive handicap to India in giving help to Bangladesh militarily, because India and the Soviet Union had been

insisting on 'a political settlement' in Bangladesh That, even after repression had begun in Bangladesh with a vengeance, India and the USSR should have striven for a political settlement showed that neither state had any desire to see the break-up of Pakistan Pakistan has only itself to thank for its disruption As Mujibur Rahman once said, 'Pakistan in the East has been buried under a mountain of corpses, drowned in a river of blood'

In the grim Bangladesh crisis, the Indo-Soviet Treaty was a source of great strength to India It also helped to sustain the people's morale, which remained unshaken even during the appearance of the 7th Fleet in the Bay of Bengal

The Indo-Soviet Treaty was not designed simply to meet a temporary crisis It was the outcome of two decades of close friendship and cooperation After the war was over the accent has been on economic cooperation A joint Indo-Soviet Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation was set up as a result of an agreement reached in Moscow in 1972 The net result of the agreement can be described as TRIAD, or a combination of trade and aid, or aid which is self-repaying

The foremost objective of the Indo-Soviet Treaty is to preserve peace The fear of a nuclear war has now receded as a result of the Brezhnev-Nixon agreement Peace is no longer upheld by the balance of mutual terror but by mutual agreement to avoid nuclear war

Has the detente also removed the possibility of the occurrence of local and conventional wars? Not altogether But it has at least reduced this possibility There is a realisation on all sides that local and conventional wars might not remain local or conventional for long

India has unreservedly welcomed the detente between the USA and the USSR It has never regarded the policy of non alignment as a means of making the best of both worlds by playing them off against each other India's policy was farthest removed from Pakistan's policy which President Ayub Khan once called 'triangular rope-walking—an agile but dangerous game, as recent events have shown.

Now that the cold war has ended, the USA cannot have the same incentive to back Pakistan, right or wrong It was as an instrument of the cold war that Pakistan was indiscriminately, and, indeed, indiscreetly supported by the USA, to the loss of its own prestige Moreover, the value of a truncated Pakistan as an ally is considerably less than before, and it has become totally absurd now to talk of 'parity in the subcontinent'

Other regions in Asia, however, continue to be hotbeds of tension The peace settlement in Vietnam has not yet yielded peace The Middle East remains a cauldron Out of this cauldron, Iran has emerged as a veritable Moloch, equipped by the USA with the latest and most sophisticated weapons of destruction, worth three billion dollars There are some observers who see in this the emergence of an American-Iranian-Pakistani axis There are good reasons why America should wish lavishly to support Iran Iran has assured America of an uninterrupted supply of oil which the Arab states are not in a mood to do

There are also good reasons why Iran should wish to support Pakistan If the Baluchis' desire for local autonomy gathers strength and flares up into anything like the Bengalees' bid for independence, there will be repercussions in Iran, as Iran too has a considerable, disgruntled Baluchi population

India cannot ignore the latest developments in the Middle East It cannot ignore the Shah's statement that in a war between Pakistan and India, Iran would be on the side of Pakistan This statement was subsequently modified to mean that Iran would go to the aid of Pakistan only if Pakistan was attacked When war breaks out, however, the question whether a country has attacked another or has been the victim of an attack becomes highly subjective As for the USA, India cannot help asking, in the light of past experience, whether the American policy of feeding the Shah's ambition to establish 'the biggest military power between the east of Suez and west of Japan' is not a continuation of the Dullesian policy of trying to teach India a lesson for its refusal to toe the American line Basically, this attitude has been the bane of American policy after the Second World War, except for a brief spell when John Kennedy was President

To sum up, despite the Soviet-American detente, which is a most wholesome development, certain other developments in Asia in the recent past cannot but be a cause for concern Their impact on the Indo-Soviet Treaty has been neatly summed up by Inder Malhotra, a well-known Indian journalist, thus 'With both the Americans and the Chinese behind the Shah and his Pakistani proteges, there is no escape from an even closer cooperation than there has been so far between India and the Soviet Union Jagjivan Ram's talks in Moscow recently, therefore, acquire great significance Those who do not like the Indo-Soviet Treaty have only themselves to blame if it has become more, rather than less, relevant with the passage of time'

(*Indian Express*, 1975)

56. Brezhnev's Visit in Perspective

Brezhnev's visit to India has been adequately covered by the press, the radio and other organs of publicity It has roused world-wide interest, and its significance has been fully commented upon by scholars, historians and politicians In this article, I shall try to place Brezhnev's visit in its proper historical perspective

When I was taking part in the various events connected with Brezhnev's visit, such as his ceremonial arrival and departure, the banquet in his honour by Mrs Indira Gandhi, his reception at a mammoth citizens' meeting in Red Fort, New Delhi, his memorable address to Parliament, his meeting with ISCUS and his own magnificent banquet, my thoughts went back to another visit, with which I was closely connected, the historic visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to the USSR in June, 1955 I also thought of the first visit of Soviet leaders, Bulganin and Khrushchev, to India in November, 1955

Incidentally, I was happy to meet Bulganin last month after a lapse of fifteen years He and I happened to stay in the same lovely sanatorium in Sochi, a beautiful resort on the Black Sea Bulganin has aged considerably and looks somewhat frail, but he is still his old gracious self He still has that elegant, pointed beard which gives him the look of an 18th century French count

His beard reminded me of an incident which occurred during Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union At Nehru's reception, Indian mangoes were served. Bulganin had a bite of a mango, and the juice flowed freely down his beard, to the Gargantuan amusement of Khrushchev Nehru had taken with him a thousand mangoes from India—a fruit never before seen in Moscow—and a leading American daily wrote a leaderette called 'mango diplomacy' At about the same time referring to the presentation of two baby elephants to the Soviet children by Nehru, a Pakistani newspaper wrote an article called 'elephant diplomacy' It is good to think that our diplomacy, flavoured with mangoes and supported by elephants, has produced a rich repast of friendship, culminating in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

The visits of 1955 were rather different from the visit of Brezhnev in 1973 Brezhnev's visit was described by the official spokesman as 'ceremonial in form and official in content' The earlier visits were predominantly ceremonial and exploratory. Nehru did indeed explore the Soviet Union, in the manner in which exploring is done in this aerial age He flew over almost every republic and visited a number of state capitals apart from Moscow

Wherever Nehru went he had a tumultuous reception That was the case with the Soviet leaders in India too The result of these mutual visits was that both sides became convinced that India and the Soviet Union, despite all differences of social structure and ideological outlook, can and must be friends This conclusion was reinforced by subsequent developments and, in particular, by the deterioration of India's relations, as well as the relations of the Soviet Union, with China

On the whole, the exchange of visits in 1955 may be said to have broken the ice in Indo-Soviet relations A thick layer of distrust had accumulated during the British period In the 19th century a cardinal principle of British foreign policy was the fear of 'the Russian bogey', and when the bogey-man put on the red cloak of communism he looked all the more formidable It was fortunate that the ice was so effectively dispelled in the fifties, because great dangers lay ahead for India in the subsequent decade, when it had to fight three wars Whatever the nature of the crisis, political or economic, major or minor, man-made or made by nature, whether it occurred over Kashmir, Goa or Bangladesh, the Soviet Union has stood by India

This was the setting in which Brezhnev visited India. In 1955 India and the Soviet Union were acquaintances who hoped to be friends, now, they were friends, united by a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation Friends can afford to be businesslike Never have I watched a more businesslike visit than Brezhnev's For full five days he stuck to Delhi Indeed, he may be said to have stuck to Rashtrapati Bhavan, except occasionally to fulfil an inevitable ceremonial engagement like the citizens' reception in Red Fort There he was greeted by one of the largest crowds Delhi has seen This showed his impact, and the impact of the USSR, on the mind of the common man

During the five days of Brezhnev's visit, there were more hours of talk than during the 21 days of Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the USSR and the 18-day visit of the Soviet leaders to India in 1955 They were purposeful talks and have resulted in an impressive joint declaration and a most fruitful agreement on economic and technical cooperation and other subsidiary agreements

The Joint Declaration has shown how close, if not identical, is the attitude of India and the Soviet Union on such burning international problems as Vietnam, West Asia and the regions in Africa which are still harassed by colonialism and racialism On the problems of this sub-continent, too, there is no difference in the thinking of India and the Soviet Union The Declaration contains an expression of India's warm appreciation of the present international detente, of which Brezhnev is one of the principal architects It also contains a wholehearted tribute to Mrs Indira Gandhi for her peaceful and democratic politics

India has supported the Soviet proposal in the United Nations that there should be a 10 per cent cut in the military budget of all Great Powers and that the amount so saved should be used partly for the benefit of the common people in developing countries And the Soviet Union has offered its support to the efforts of India, and other countries in the region, to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace On the very day on which this Declaration was published, the US government declared its intention to increase its naval presence in the Indian Ocean This was on par with the conduct of John Foster Dulles who, on the very day on which Bulganin declared that the Soviet government regarded Goa as 'an integral part of India', called Goa 'a province of Portugal' The 'province of Portugal' has gone with the wind, so will the effort to convert the Indian Ocean into a sphere of Great Power rivalry

There has been much needless controversy regarding Brezhnev's proposal for the so-called collective security scheme for Asia This term does not find expression in the Joint Declaration India has always disliked labels for instance, it has declared its goal to be 'a socialistic pattern of society' rather than 'socialism' Similarly, in periphrastic terms India has endorsed the idea behind the so-called Brezhnev scheme

Indeed, Brezhnev himself had make it clear in all his utterances, culminating in his address to the World Peace Conference in Moscow at the end of October, which was attended by 3,500 delegates from 144 countries, and also in his impressive address to the members of our Parliament, that his so-called scheme was by no means a prefabricated plan but simply an idea—an idea which had to be worked out by all Asian states, without any exception whatsoever

The most concrete result of Brezhnev's visit was the 15-year plan for economic cooperation and trade between India and the Soviet Union This comprehensive agreement covers a wide range of in-

dustrial and agricultural fields It provides for the strengthening of cooperation in various fields, like the peaceful use of atomic energy, space, electronics, geological surveys, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, shipping, oil and petro-chemistry and power engineering

Under this Agreement, the capacity of the Bhilai steel plant, which now stands at 2 5 million tonnes, is to be increased to 7 million, and of Bokaro to 10 million tonnes In this connection, it is worth recalling that the Soviet Union was the first country to offer to build a steel plant for India It was after the Soviet Union offered to put up a steel plant in Bhilai that Britain agreed to put up one in Durgapur, and FRG in Rourkela This shows how Soviet aid has not only helped India intrinsically but has acted as a catalytic agent for aid from other countries

India and the Soviet Union have agreed to try and almost double the volume of their trade by 1980 The growth of Indo-Soviet trade during the last decade has been truly phenomenal When I was posted to the Soviet Union in 1952, the value of the trade stood at 30 million rupees, by the time I left the Soviet Union in 1961, it has risen to 1,000 million rupees Now it stands at about 5,000 million rupees, and by 1980, it is expected to reach a figure between 7,500 and 10,000 million rupees

In order to facilitate the implementation of the agreement on economic cooperation and trade it has been decided to set up a joint Indo-Soviet study group in the sphere of economic planning This is in addition to the inter-governmental economic commission which had been set up as a sequel to the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

A visit which has opened up such vast vistas for the economic development of India can truly be called a landmark in the Indo-Soviet relations Underlying the 15-year agreement is the conviction that the expansion of economic cooperation and trade between India and the USSR 'will be in the interest of the people of both countries in their struggle for economic and social progress'

In other words, it will contribute to the building of that new India, the vision of which was held out by Mahatma Gandhi and the objective of which is, in his magnificent phrase, 'to remove every tear from every eye' When this new India assumes shape Brezhnev's visit will be regarded, if not as a landmark, at least as an important milestone in the march of Indian history

(*Indian and Foreign Review*, 1973)

57 Brezhnev's War-time Reminiscences

Jawaharlal Nehru's literary admirers used to say that he had missed his profession in life Whatever he wrote had a rare literary grace and distinction Some people felt that if, instead of plunging into politics, he had devoted himself exclusively to writing, he would have been one of the great writers of this century As it is, he is reckoned by competent critics as one of the ten finest writers of English prose in our time

I had a similar feeling when I read L I Brezhnev's reminiscences of the war years He is a man of action in every fibre of his being and this trait comes through in every line he has written At the same time, his reminiscences show that there is a reflective side to his nature This gives a philosophic touch to his comments on the motley crowd of men, whom he had to meet in various capacities, and on the heroic events of his time, of which he was at once spectator and actor And his strong and sensitive style lends itself to vivid description as well as to tender recapitulation

As an example of Brezhnev's descriptive power I may quote his description of an artillery attack of Malaya Zemlya (of which more to follow)

"The earth was in flames, rocks smoked, steel melted and concrete crumbled, but the men, loyal to their oath, had not budged an inch Companies defied the onslaught of battalions, battalions wore down regiments Machine-gun barrels turned red hot, wounded men, pushing aside aiding men, attacked tanks with grenades, and wielded rifle-butts and knives in hand-to-hand fighting There just seemed to be no end to the battle No sooner had the earth been blanketed with the bodies of the enemy than fresh waves came towards us They were also cut down, and again and again the greyish green silhouettes appeared So nobody found it strange to hear one of the soldiers in the 8th Guards Rifle Brigade exclaim during one of the attacks 'Do they grow out of the ground, or what?' "

This is immediately followed by a passage in a very different tone, the pathos of which almost recalls Othello's heart-rending cry

The pity of it, Iago, oh, the pity of it!

'Our losses were heavy', says Brezhnev, 'and the thought often flashed through my mind how many of our lads would remain lying there, how many of them would never see their homes again? The question of pity in war is a difficult one to sort out War is a cruel business, and death is inevitable To take pity on one man is to send another in his place There is only one moral justification for all this—to be with the fighting men when the going is toughest, to go through the same dangers, do everything one possibly can to make sure they don't take any unwarranted risk, and to ease their burdens'

On another occasion, reflecting on the heavy casualties among his friends and comrades, he comforts himself by recalling Konstantine Simonov's poem on 'A friend's death'

Not true, a friend never dies,
He's simply no longer by your side
He doesn't share with you his ties,
And in your car he doesn't ride

Brezhnev took part in the Second World War for '1418 blazing days and nights', from the first day to the last Before the war he was Secretary of the Regional Dniepropetrovsk Party Committee A part of his duties was to explain current developments to the people At one of his meetings a member of the audience expressed the misgivings of the people regarding the non-aggression Pact, which was known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which had been concluded between the USSR and Germany in 1939

'Comrade Brezhnev', said the questioner, 'we have to explain the non-aggression pact, that it's in earnest But the people don't seem to have much faith in it So what can we do? Should we explain or not explain it?' It was a very difficult moment, says Brezhnev, four hundred people were sitting in the hall, all waiting for the answer There was no time to ponder over the matter 'Yes, we must explain it, without fail', he replied, 'and we'll go on explaining it, Comrades, until fascist Germany is razed to the ground'

One can imagine what a tonic effect this robust assertion must have had on the audience The real reason, namely, that at that time the

Soviet Union was not ready to take on Hitler's Germany and, by this Pact, was trying to gain time, would have produced little impression on the audience

When the war broke out Brezhnev immediately asked to be sent to the front His request was granted immediately, and he was appointed Chief of the 18th Army's Political Department He fought with that Army in the Caucasus, in the Ukraine and beyond the frontiers of the USSR One of his most thrilling experiences was the protracted battle in Malaya Zemlya, and it is this which forms the subject of his reminiscences, published in the recent issues of the *Soviet Land*

Malaya Zemlya, or, as it is translated less euphonically into English, 'small land', or, better, 'a small piece of land', was the affectionate name given by Soviet soldiers to a small strip of land which they had seized on the shore of the Black Sea At that time almost the entire mainland including the Crimea, the Caucasus, the Ukraine and some parts of Russia was in German hands I myself saw in a sanatorium in the Crimea in 1957, that the crockery and cutlery was embossed with the swastika sign it had been left behind by the Nazis It showed how sure they were that they had come to stay in the Crimea for ever

Malaya Zemlya was a bare rocky piece of land, 24 kilometres in extant, but it had to be held because it was the only key on the Black Sea to the recovery of the Crimea and the Caucasus It barred Hitler from executing his 'Barbarossa Plan' for the invasion of Asia through the Caucasus and Iran To hold this beach-head, however, was an extremely difficult task Even the landing was most hazardous Brezhnev has described the landing as 'a model in the art of war', where there had to be perfect coordination between the infantry, the artillery, the soldiers and the engineering units 'Still', says Brezhnev, 'I don't remember a single troop crossing when the Fascists didn't kill, didn't down, hundreds of our men And yet there were always 12,000 to 15,000 soldiers there' The ship on which Brezhnev himself was crossing into Malaya Zemlya was blown up by a bomb explosion, as a result of which he and the pilot, by whose side he was standing, were flung into the sea, and he had a narrow escape from a watery grave

Malaya Zemlya was soon turned into an underground fortress, with underground ammunition dumps, underground hospitals and underground electric stations It was subject to incessant bombing raids from the enemy who were only a few metres away, and the men had to live for days together in the trenches A young woman soldier, Maria, kept a diary in which she has vividly described the life in the trenches thus

"You crawl out from underground to get a glimpse of the wide world, and your heart truly rejoices How wonderful it is to be alive! But the fields all around are ploughed up by the cruel machine of war Everywhere you see the ruins of buildings and the spatters of rusty-red blood on the lacerated and dismembered earth You've just begun to drink in the sun, and you hear 'Air raid!' Again you find yourself in your cave, where the damp smacks you in the face and where you can barely make out your friends in the soot of the shell lamps"

Brezhnev comments on the fate of this woman thus

'Like many of our heroes, Maria did not live to see our days As my thoughts go back to this fine young woman, they also turn to our country's many other daughters who shared all the trials and tribulations of war with our men For me, they are the embodiment of the greatness of the Soviet Union'

The soldiers suffered incredible hardships They were totally cut off from the mainland, and there was a shortage even of salt and bread Yet the men joked, laughed, issued newspapers, held meetings, organised chess tournaments, birthday parties and song and dance competitions

The heroic spirit of the men is reflected in a statement which was drafted by Brezhnev and signed by hundreds of soldiers with their own blood and sent to Josef Stalin

"We called the bit of land we had captured from the enemy near Novorossiisk 'Malaya Zemlya' But although it is small, it is our land, Soviet land, it is drenched with our sweat and blood, and we will never relinquish it to any enemy . We swear by our combat colours, by our wives and children, by our beloved homeland, we swear that we will stand firm in the coming battles against the enemy, that we will wear down his forces, and clear Taman of the fascist scum We will make this small bit of land a huge grave for the Hitlerites!"

At last, after 225 days of 'relentless deadly perils, unimaginable hardships and selfless heroism' the pendulum swung in favour of the Soviet side on the Black Sea As the day for taking the offensive grew nearer 'the thirst for revenge was almost unbearable' At 2 44 a m on the 20th April 1943, the offensive was launched 800 guns and 200

Katyushas opened fire and 150 bombers went up in the air So mighty was the blow that 'it seemed as if the entire earth was collapsing' In three days 117 enemy planes were downed and the Germans were driven out of the commanding heights and forests, which they had occupied The way was now open for the capture of Novorossiisk This city had been captured by the Nazis and turned into an impregnable fortress, but they were dislodged from the city in just six days

The liberation of Novorossiisk was one of the most outstanding events in the Second World War Soon after its capture the city was a picture of desolation, vividly described by Brezhnev thus

'We didn't organise a meeting of the city's inhabitants there were no inhabitants Then we walked out into the streets, but there were no streets only ruins Only small fires burning throughout the city An old woman and a cat were found in a basement somewhere, but nobody else'

'Looking back today', says Brezhnev, 'a third of a century later, at what our army's soldiers, commanders and political officers had to endure, there are moments when it is almost impossible to believe that it had all really happened, that they could have withstood all that But they did They defied it all, lived through it all, crushed the Fascists, and went on to Victory'

Despite all the hardships which they encountered, the men never lost their humanity and sense of humour Brezhnev relates the incident of a cow which was seen wandering on the mountains by a Soviet soldier and was brought to the camp and adopted by the entire unit, and its milk was regularly supplied to the hospital, which used to be the cellar of what had been a vineyard before the war

'But the important thing wasn't the milk', says Brezhnev 'The cow brought the men a lot of joy, especially those from the countryside After each bombing or shelling they would come running to find out whether their darling was safe, whether or not it had been injured, and would stroke it gently It's not an easy thing to explain, but the appearance of this purely peacetime creature [Mahatma Gandhi once called a cow 'a poem of pity'] in a situation and atmosphere that were enormously tense helped people preserve a certain psychological equilibrium It helped remind the men that all the joys of life would return, that life was still going on, but that life had to be defended and fought for"

Brezhnev sums up his experiences thus

'We buried loyal comrades right to the final day of the war We saw the scars of fascist atrocities along all the roads of that war We met weeping mothers, inconsolable widows and hungry orphans And if someone were to ask me today what was the most important conclusion I drew from the war, which I went through from the beginning to the end, I would say There must never be another war There must never be another war again That is what I consider to be the most important conclusion I drew from the experience of the war '

Here, we hear the authentic voice of one of the principal architects of the recent international *détente* If the *détente* among the Great Powers has not yielded in full the results which had been hoped for, Brezhnev is not to blame On the contrary, one can rest assured that, as far as it lies in his power, he would endeavour to prevent the resurgence of the cold war and to move mankind away from the Damocles' sword of nuclear annihilation

58 The Rebirth of a Nation

One of my most interesting experiences in the Soviet Union was a journey by road from Moscow to the Crimea We spent a night or two at various places *en route*, such as Yasnaya Polyana, which was the abode of Leo Tolstoy, Orel, where Turgenev lived, Kiev, the ancient capital where Russia was converted to Christianity, and Zaporozhye and Dnieper Petrovsk, once the haunts of the brave dare devil Cossacks At Zaporozhye we went and saw the famous tree under which the Cossacks, when called upon to surrender by the Sultan of Turkey, dictated, in the presence of the Sultan's envoys, to a professional letter writer, the only literary man among them, one of the most vitriolic and abusive letters in history A scene which has been immortalised in a picture by the celebrated Russian artist, Repin, which we had seen in the Tretyakov art gallery in Moscow

To an idle foreign traveller this region conjured up romantic visions of the past, right down to the time of Sholokhov who has captured the spirit of this area in his immortal novel, *And Quiet Flows the Don* For a Russian, however, it rouses more recent and more poignant memories memories of the bitter fighting against the German invaders who had occupied the entire region, and of the gigantic reconstruction after the War Leonid Brezhnev was in charge of the reconstruction in Zaporozhye and Dniepropetrovsk as the First Secretary of the Regional Committee soon after the War Many years later, Brezhnev wrote 'Whenever I happen to be in my native parts, I not only admire the beauty of the Dnieper banks, but also recollect this particular road was laid in my time, that Palace of Culture was built when I was there, and those factories, power stations, mines, and those city streets and collective farm villages—all contain some particle of my work, my thoughts, my feelings, and my sleepless nights'

The portion of Brezhnev's reminiscences, dealing with the reconstruction of Zaporozhye and Dniepropetrovsk is appropriately called 'rebirth' It reflects, and is indeed a microcosm of, the spirit which infused the whole nation not merely in resisting Fascism, but in

rebuilding towns and cities, and restoring plants and factories, which had been totally destroyed

When Brezhnev took over as First Secretary of the Regional Committee, Zaporozhye was a picture of utter desolation He writes 'Blades of grass were springing up amid the twisted girders and rubble From the distance came the howling of stray dogs All about was devastation, the only signs of life being the dark nests of the crows hanging from the surviving branches of the war-charred trees'

In Zaporozhye 74 schools, 24 hospitals, 2 technical institutes, 5 cinema houses, 239 shops and a thousand large houses had been destroyed Above all, the Dnieper Power Station and the Zaporozhye Iron and Steel Works lay in ruins To the Russians they had a sentimental significance, even as Bhilai and Bhakra Nangal have for Indians A young student wrote in the visitors' book 'The Dnieper Power Station on our soil is just like Pushkin in literature, or Tchaikovsky in music Whatever gigantic stations may arise on the Volga, the Angara and the Yenisei, they cannot eclipse the glory of the patriarch of the Soviet power industry'

How the reconstruction was effected in record time is the story of Brezhnev's 'Rebirth' General Stulpnagel, the defeated German General, who had commanded the Dnieper area during the War, comforted Hitler by telling him 'A period of 25 years—that is the time Russia will need to restore what has been destroyed' Yet in the Dnieper area it took Russia less than 25 months to do so

When Brezhnev took over as the First Regional Secretary he found that discipline was slack, priorities had not been determined, and there was not even a work schedule The prevalent psychology was we shall somehow muddle through Brezhnev changed all that, and before long the manner in the Zaporozhye Iron and Steel Works and the Dnieper Hydro-electric Power Station were restored came to be regarded as a classic model of how reconstruction can be done

Brezhnev relied far more on persuasion than on compulsion He had no compunction in imposing punishment on hardened offenders, but he asked Why create an atmosphere of fear and nervousness?' What was needed was to educate the people Through newspapers and Party meetings, the entire city was kept abreast of what was happening on the site The entire population, young and old, took an interest in the reconstruction 'Why is it', a young wife would ask her husband, 'that others are being praised, and you are not at all in the picture?' Or, a child would ask, 'Why is it, Daddy, that people are clapping their hands for uncle Pyotr, but not for you?' Thus, apart

from material incentives, the force of public opinion was brought to bear on the work and workers

Brezhnev was not tired of dinning into the minds of the workers, supervisors and managers the importance of a cardinal communist principle, criticism and self-criticism Occasionally Brezhnev himself was subjected to criticism and was hurt by it 'After all', says Brezhnev, 'criticism is no chocolate to be liked Only an irresponsible and shallow-minded person will listen to reproaches with unconcern, laugh them off and immediately put them out of his mind, but with us, true Bolsheviks, criticism creates zeal and vigour, and dissatisfaction stimulates a desire to work better'

When the day of days arrived and the order was issued, 'Blow in the blast furnace!', and the furnace roared into action, and the Zaporozhye Iron and Steel Works was reborn, there was wild rejoicing 'How well I remember that day!', writes Brezhnev 'The steady roar of the furnace made it hard to make oneself heard, but the sound was something every iron and steel worker is used to I, too, was glad to hear it, for at heart, I was still an iron and steel worker The oxygen cutter burnt through the iron notch and a trickle of white hot metal appeared Scattering sparks on all sides, the trickle turned into a stream of molten pig iron We could not take our eyes off the rippling stream and walked alongside to watch the ladle being filled I remember Bardin pressing my hand as I pressed his, and our embracing the furnace crew'

It has been said that peace has its victories no less glorious than war Of this saying the reconstruction of Zaporozhye and Dniepropetrovsk is a superb example The secret of the victory lay in the fact that in peace as well as in war the people knew the significance of the sacrifices they were called upon to make

'Hitlerites', writes Brezhnev, 'had plenty of equipment and everything necessary for war, and yet we won because both we and the soldiers we led into battle had a deep understanding of the cause for which we were assaulting enemy fortifications under deadly fire' Not the least of Brezhnev's tasks, as the First Regional Party Secretary, was to develop in the people a deep understanding of what the Soviet Union stands for, a task in which he is still engaged on a nation-wide scale as President and Party Secretary of the USSR

59. The Soviet Party Congress and the Third World

The 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union starts today, February 24 This seems a suitable occasion for looking back and seeing what impact such Congresses have had on the Third World

The 1st Congress of the Communist Party was held in the year of my birth, 1898 At that time the term, 'Third World', had not come into vogue There was but one world, the world of capitalism Side by side with capitalism flourished imperialism, which V I Lenin called 'the highest stage of capitalism' The highest product of capitalism was the British Empire on which, it used to be said, the sun never set, for the empire was so far flung that in a twenty-four-hour-day, the sun would be always shining in one part of the empire or the other The Communist Party Congress, held in 1898, contained a germ which was to prove fatal to all kinds of political domination and economic exploitation

By 1917, the germ had matured sufficiently for it to bring down the fabulous fabric of the Tsarist Empire The architects of the Great October Revolution, however, were not content with a purely Russian Revolution The sixth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, held in 1917, gave a call for world revolution

The year 1917 thus saw the birth of a new world, rivalling capitalism, namely, the world of socialism By a striking coincidence, that year also saw the appearance in India of a man who was destined to be one of the principal progenitors of the Third World, namely, Mahatma Gandhi In the years of his long self-imposed exile in South Africa, he had been fashioning, in his own way, the weapons for combating racism and imperialism At a great meeting in the Dynamo Stadium during Jawaharlal Nehru's historic visit to the Soviet Union in 1955, he commented on the significance of the simultaneous, albeit fortuitous, appearance of V I Lenin in Russia and of Mahatma Gandhi in India

Thirty years had to pass before the Third World began to emerge

During these years, the potential leaders of the potential Third World were watching with interest the developments in the world of socialism They observed how in 1919, at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a programme for the creation of a socialist society was adopted, how, in 1925, the 14th Congress adopted a policy of rapid industrialisation, so as to remove the age-old backwardness of Russia, and, even more, of Central Asia, and how the 15th Congress, held in 1927, proclaimed a policy for the collectivisation of agriculture The plough was replaced by the tractor, and a nation of largely illiterate Mudzhiks was transformed into a modern, literate, industrialised society with a high degree of culture

This was not done a minute too soon, because fascism which was out to destroy socialism as well as democracy was gathering strength in Europe 'We have ten years', said Stalin prophetically in 1932, 'to catch up with them Either we do so or they destroy us'

'They' did not destroy 'us' On the contrary they were destroyed by the combined forces of democracy and socialism in an epic struggle in which the Soviet Union took the leading part and made the greatest sacrifices At the San Fransisco Conference of 1945, the hope of building a new world, free from the scourge and scare of war, was written into the Charter of the United Nations How high these hopes ran, I can testify, for I was one of the participants at that conference

Alas, these hopes have not been fulfilled Hardly was the Second World War over, when the cold war descended on the world, turning into a hot war in such peripheries as Korea and Indo China We had hoped that the Indian subcontinent, at any rate, would remain immune from the cold war This was one of the main purposes for which the policy of non-alignment was devised by Jawaharlal Nehru But John Foster Dulles, the most determined among the post war cold warriors, inveigled Pakistan with the offer of vast quantities of arms and money, into such instruments of the cold war as CENTO and SEATO, which he, in his pactomania, had sedulously devised

The world was now faced with an unprecedentedly grave danger Man had invented a weapon which might result in the destruction of civilisation if not the human race itself The Soviet Union was the first great power to have fully appreciated the dangers of the situation In 1956, at the 20th Congress, the Communist Party took courage in both hands and, modifying the maxim of Karl Marx that war is inevitable, declared that there is no fatal inevitability about war The Congress also clearly reiterated Lenin's policy of peaceful coexistence

The international developments during the next two decades

showed the paramount need for coexistence The only alternative to coexistence is coextinction in a nuclear holocaust At the 24th Congress of the CPSU, the doctrine of coexistence was again reaffirmed, and the Soviet Union launched a comprehensive Peace Programme with the following objectives

1 to bring about a political settlement in Indo-China and to eschew the use of force in the solution of problems,

2 to ensure the inviolability of the post-war European frontiers, to bring about detente and peace in Europe, to convene an all-European conference of security and cooperation, and to annul or dismantle all military organisations in Europe,

3 to ban nuclear and other dangerous weapons, to promote nuclear-free zones, and to press for nuclear disarmament on the part of the five nuclear powers,

4 to stop the arms race, to dismantle foreign military bases, to reduce the strength of the armed forces and military expenditure, and to call a world disarmament conference,

5 to root out colonialism, racism and apartheid,

6 to promote cooperation in every sphere of life

At the 25th Congress the CPSU will doubtless take note of the extent to which these objectives had been fulfilled or frustrated It will also take note of the fact that there has been a resurgence of fascism, of which Chile is the most flagrant, but by no means the only example While attending the San Fransisco Conference in 1945, I little dreamt that in another 30 years, the need would arise for holding an International Anti-Fascist Conference such as the one which was held in Patna in December 1975 and was attended by some 6,000 delegates and the representatives of some 60 countries Nor did I suspect that fascist elements in India, in collusion with neo-imperialist elements abroad, would seek to overthrow, by hook or crook, a government which is rooted in the affections of the masses and enjoys an overwhelming majority in Parliament

The 25th Congress will launch the 10th Soviet Five-Year Plan It has set its targets high The annual income is to increase by 24 to 28 per cent, the per capita income by 20 to 22 per cent, and the industrial output by 25 to 39 per cent To take only a few commodities, the production of oil is to increase to 620-640 million tonnes, of steel to 160-170 million tonnes, of coal to 790-810 million tonnes and of grain to 215-220 million tonnes

Soviet economic assistance has been of immense benefit to the peoples of the Third World The emphasis is on agriculture and light in-

dustry in the less developed countries and on heavy industry and technology in the more developed countries

Indo-Soviet cooperation, which began with the historic agreement of the February 2, 1955 for the construction of what Jawaharlal Nehru called 'that modern temple', the Bhilai steel plant, has been growing majestically and was crystallised in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, which was signed in the grimmest hour of independent India's history, in 1971 It received a further spurt as a result of Mr Brezhnev's visit to India in 1973 No less than 80 major projects are being constructed or designed with Soviet assistance, and the total financial credit given by the Soviet Union comes to Rs 1,022 crores Today Soviet-aided projects account for 20 per cent of our power, 30 per cent of our steel, 30 per cent of oil refining, 60 per cent of oil extraction and 80 per cent of heavy machinery It is very largely due to the Soviet Union's assistance that India has emerged as one of the ten top industrialised nations in the world

The USSR has also rendered appreciable assistance in the sphere of agriculture Two fully mechanised farms have been set up at Suratgarh and Jetsar and five seed farms have been established so as to form the nucleus of our programme for the improvement of seed

The volume of Indo-Soviet trade has shown a phenomenal rise during the last two decades In 1952, my first year in Moscow, the value of the out-turn came to little more than Rs 1 crore, by 1961, my last year in Moscow, it had touched Rs 100 crores On the eve of Brezhnev's visit to India in 1973 it stood at Rs 430 crores It was then envisaged that the trade should be increased by 1 5 to 2 times before the end of the decade There is every hope that this target will be reached The estimated out-turn of trade for 1975 is valued at Rs 700 to 750 crores

In framing the Tenth Five-Year Plan, the Soviet authorities have kept a solicitous eye on the requirements of the Third World The 25th Congress, at which this plan will come up for approval, will therefore be of great interest to the countries of the Third World, and to India in particular Of equal interest will be the measures to be devised or confirmed at the 25th Congress for combating the menace of fascism which, in collusion with neo-imperialism, has raised its head in parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America

(*Indian Express*, 1976.)

60. My 'Affair' with Russia

Not long ago, there was a review of my latest book, *A Diplomat Speaks*, in a leading Indian newspaper which is not noted for its friendliness towards the Soviet Union 'Diplomats,' said the review, 'have been known to fall in love with the countries where they are sent to represent their governments. In the annals of such affairs, that of the Indian Ambassador to the USSR is a notable contribution, both for its duration (1952-61) and for its loyalty'

It may be of general interest to analyse the nature of my 'affair' with the USSR, which sometimes causes a needless controversy. People seem to forget the fact that my so-called affair with the USSR reflects my own country's affair with that friendly country, which also causes a needless controversy

My affair did not begin in 1952, my first year in Moscow it began earlier Nor did it end with 1961, my last year in the USSR

My acquaintance with the Soviet Union began in 1943 in British times in Chungking, where I was appointed Agent-General for India in China That was the first time I set my eyes on a Russian Ambassador, or, for that matter, on a Russian. Paniushkin's attitude towards the Indian Agent-General was very different from that of the majority of the diplomatic corps The British Ambassador to China, Sir Horace Seymour, one of the finest diplomatists and one of the finest men I have come across, was overwhelmingly friendly So were Sir Edward Eggleston, the scholarly Minister of Australia, and Gen Odlum, the vigorous and outspoken Minister of Canada. The other Heads of Missions, however, began by being strictly formal in their relations with the Indian Representative They seemed to think that 'the Agent-General' was an intruder into the diplomatic corps Technically they were right

Diplomats attach much attention to protocol, and all major matters of protocol are still regulated by the Convention of Vienna which was signed a century and a half ago Under the Convention diplomats are divided into three categories ambassadors, ministers and charge d' affaires There was no such entity as Agent-General with the rank of

Minister According to protocol, I paid my call on all the heads of missions, who were scattered on both sides of the River Yangtse None of the non-Commonwealth heads of missions, except the Soviet Ambassador, returned my call in person They merely sent their cards

Paniushkin demonstrated his regard for India in another unconventional way He invited the Turkish Ambassador and myself to dinner and seated me to the right of the hostess and the Turk to the left The Turkish Ambassador naturally protested against the blatant breach of protocol, as an Ambassador ranked above a Minister, let alone a mere Agent-General Paniushkin replied that he gave me the place of honour as the representative of a country which had fought bravely on the side of the Allies, whereas Turkey sat on the fence

Soviet friendship for India was further impressed on me in 1944 in the course of my overland journey from India to China Schesterikov, the Soviet Consul-General in Kashgar and his gracious wife, who was so gracious that I noted in my diary that 'beneath the red complexion of many a Russian runs the blue blood of an aristocrat', and Evsev, the Soviet Consul-General in Urumchi, vied with Gillet, the British Consul-General in Kashgar and my genial host in Sinkiang, in showering their kindnesses on me

I came to know the Russians better when I became independent India's first Foreign Secretary It was then that the first trade agreement between India and the USSR was signed Let me recall a significant incident which occurred then In the draft agreement there was a proposal for the exchange of experts and technical personnel. This draft was sent to other ministries The provision for the exchange of experts and technical personnel was strongly objected to by the Home Ministry which was then headed by that 'man of iron', Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel H V R Iyengar, the Home Secretary, came to me and said that the clause in question was a dangerous one and that under that clause spies and saboteurs might enter India in large numbers and wreck our economy The Ministry of External Affairs, however, insisted on retaining that clause Since then thousands of Soviet experts have come to India and there has not been a whisper of suspicion that any of them have indulged in any undesirable activities They have conformed to the law of the land in every respect They have been conformed to the law of prohibition, a hard thing for a Russian to do!

Thus my affair with the Russians began in the forties It might have begun even earlier In 1934 my wife and I wanted to visit a number of countries in Europe including the USSR Anujee's passport was endorsed 'to all countries', my passport, 'to all countries except the

USSR and Turkey' It was feared that Kemal Ataturk's Turkey as well as Communist Russia might contaminate the mind of a young Indian!

The Government of India could prevent a mere civil servant like me from visiting Russia but not a man like Jawaharlal Nehru, who was beginning to have international fame, nor a poet of world stature such as Rabindranath Tagore Nehru visited Russia in 1927, and Tagore in 1930 India, wrote Nehru on the conclusion of his visit, is an Asian country So is the USSR sprawling over Asia and Europe 'Between two such countries,' said Nehru, 'there can be amity or enmity Indifference is out of the question '

Tagore was even more enthusiastic about what he saw in the USSR 'Nowhere else in man's history,' he wrote, 'have I seen any lasting reason for good cheer and hope '

If my 'affair' with the USSR did not begin with my Ambassadorship, nor did it end with its end Soon after retirement, I was elected President of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Soviety and in that capacity I have been privileged to continue unofficially the mission of promoting the friendship between the two countries

One word in the passage from the review, quoted in the first para of this article, needs comment, namely, loyalty If the reviewer had used the word, consistency or intensity, it would have been understandable But loyalty is a different matter This is a faint suggestion of divided loyalties on my part There is even a doubt whether loyalty to the USSR is altogether consistent with loyalty to India 'Winning friends abroad,' this review says, 'is part of an Ambassador's job Staying friends with people who matter at home is another Menon did both with equal ardour ' I would like to think that it is precisely because I have won friends for India abroad that I have stayed friends with people who matter at home

The comments of the reviewer remind me of a somewhat similar experience which I had with another newspaper some ten years ago At a meeting of the National Council of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society in Ernakulam, I said that, having spent a fourth of my service—and those the most mature years—in the USSR, I had begun to regard it as 'my second home' A Bombay weekly, *The Current*, published a report with the heading 'KPS calls Russia his motherland ' I wrote to the then Editor, D F Karaka, and pointed out that it was unfair on the part of the reporter to have left out the word 'second' and to have substituted the word 'motherland' for 'home' A man, I said, can have two homes, but only one mother, and India is, and would always be, my

motherland Karaka was good enough to publish my correction prominently

Thirty years have passed since I first met a Russian, 25 years since I became Foreign Secretary, and a little over 20 years since I was appointed Ambassador to the USSR During this period there has been a remarkable development of Indo-Soviet cooperation Bhilai, Bokaro, Suratgarh and dozens of other places in India have passed into the Indo-Russian political vocabulary

Apart from economic aid, politically, too, the USSR has stood by India India could count on Soviet support, whenever its territorial integrity was at stake, whether in Goa, Kashmir or in its relations with China and Pakistan And in 1971, during the Bangladesh crisis, the USSR stood by India like a rock It was then that the ever-growing friendship between the two countries was crystallised in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation And it reached a new high water-mark during the visit of Brezhnev to India at the end of 1973, when a most fruitful 15-year agreement for economic cooperation and trade development was signed

The advantages which have accrued to India from Soviet friendship are there for all to see Why, it may be asked, has the Soviet Union been going out of its way to cultivate the friendship of India? Was it not in pursuance of its policy of turning the world red?

Ideology has undoubtedly entered the picture from time to time But the strength of the ideological element, and the ideology itself, have varied from time to time One has only to think of the fundamental changes in the Soviet approach to some major international issues, made at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Amongst those changes were the declaration that war is not inevitable, that there can be different kinds of socialism and different roads to socialism, that violence is not essential for the transformation of society and that in certain circumstances socialism can be attained through parliamentary means These decisions can almost be said to have removed the ideological hurdles in the way of the development of friendship between the USSR and the 'third world'

The ideological element operated in all its vigour in British times After all, the great objective of the Revolution of 1917 was to establish socialism Socialism cannot be established without overthrowing capitalism, and imperialism, as Lenin said, is 'the highest stage of capitalism'. No wonder, therefore, that imperialist Britain and the Soviet Union were at daggers drawn with each other; and India, 'the brightest jewel in the British crown', was a principal target of the

Soviet Union But once Britain shed the empire and India became independent and itself adopted the socialistic pattern of society as its goal, there was a radical change in the whole situation

Chester Bowles, a former US Ambassador to India, said that the main difference between the Soviet and American policy towards India is that, unlike the US Government, the Soviet Government has understood, from the outset, the geo-political importance of India Whichever criterion one applies, i e , location, population, size, resources, past heritage or present policy, India is a country which counts and is bound to count more in the future This is a fact which the USSR has realised It has also realised that it is to its own good and in its own interest to enable India to stand on its legs Hence the attention which the Soviet representatives paid to Indian envoys even before India became independent, when my affair with the USSR began I am happy that this affair has not been barren It has yielded rich fruits for my country And that is all that matters

(Feature Unit, 1974)

61 India's 'Pro-Soviet Stance'

President Carter's forthcoming visit to India is an event to which all men of goodwill are looking forward

Mr Carter was recently reported to have stated at a press conference that during his visit to India he would try and 'correct India's pro-Soviet stance' Coming from so exalted a quarter, this remark cannot be ignored

To begin with, if a state takes a particular stance in any particular matter, or towards any particular country, it is not the business of another country to 'correct' it It is for the people of the country to correct it, if necessary India is a democracy and has shown itself to be one with a vengeance If the government's stance is regarded as unduly pro-Soviet, or, for that matter, pro-American, the people of India can, and doubtless will, pull up the government

A more profitable exercise for our American friends will be to ask themselves why India has come to be so friendly with the Soviet Union, despite the obvious differences in their social system, political structure and philosophical outlook The simple answer to this question is that the Soviet government and people have shown in deeds, and not merely in words, their sincere appreciation of India's interests and sentiments

No interest is more vital to a nation than its territorial integrity The experience of the past three decades has shown that India can count on the sympathy and, when necessary, support of the Soviet Union whenever its territorial integrity is at stake Take for instance Kashmir When, soon after independence, Pakistan wanted to let loose its tribesmen for an attack on Kashmir, and later sent its troops, India appealed to the Security Council in the firm belief that legally, constitutionally and politically it was on a strong wicket Originally this item was inscribed on the agenda as 'The Kashmir Question' Later on it was given the tell-tale title, 'The Indo-Pakistani Question' Throughout the debates on Kashmir the Western Powers, including the USA, took a pro-Pakistani stand, whereas the USSR even used its veto to negate a resolution declaring India as an aggressor in Kashmir

We had the same experience over Goa In 1955, the Soviet government unequivocally recognised Goa as 'an integral part of India' This was countered by John Foster Dulles, the American Secretary of State, by describing Goa as 'a province of Portugal' When, after fourteen years of patient waiting and in the face of grave and continuous provocation, Goa was integrated into India with the minimum of force, there was a big furore in the Security Council Mr Adlai Stevenson made a particularly vitriolic, though uncharacteristic, speech condemning India Evidently, he was later ashamed of this speech, for it was left out, at his own request, from 'The Complete Speeches of Adlai Stevenson' At that time there was a move even to declare India an aggressor in Goa—a move which was baulked by the fear of the Soviet veto

Above all, the Soviet Union stood firmly by India during the Bangladesh crisis in 1971 Its attitude was in sharp contrast to President Nixon's notorious 'tilt' towards Pakistan The events of this period are too well known to need reiteration It was during this crisis that the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed Nothing in the Treaty was directed against any other Power, nor was there a single word in it which militated against India's policy of non-alignment

Next only to the safeguarding of a nation's territorial integrity comes the need for developing its economy and establish it on a firm and stable basis In this respect India has received considerable help from the more developed states, and particularly from the USA But it cannot be denied that the help received from the USSR has been qualitatively different Soon after India became independent it realised that it should produce its own steel, for steel is, as it has been called, the barometer of a country's strength India approached the USA, the UK and West Germany over this matter, but with negative results It was then that the USSR offered to build a mighty metallurgical project in Bhilai This was followed by the British offer to put up a steel plant in Durgapur and the German offer to put up one in Rourkela But, as Dr V K R V Rao, the noted economist, has put it, 'If there had been no Bhilai there would have been no Durgapur and no Rourkela' India needed a fourth steel plant at Bokaro and approached the USA again for its assistance Again, after protracted consideration, the USA expressed its inability to help and the USSR stepped into the breach

Oil is another example of Soviet assistance in a vital field When India attained independence it could produce only 7 per cent of its oil

requirements 93 per cent had to be imported at a fabulous expenditure of foreign exchange Western experts who explored, or professed to explore, certain regions of India for oil reported that there was no oil there Then we approached the Soviet government, whose experts found oil in abundant quantities in the very regions which had been declared as bereft of oil by other experts

Thus the Soviet Union has been foremost in helping India to lay the foundations of its industrial superstructure Nowadays there is a legitimate feeling that more attention should be paid to agriculture, but in the modern world, agriculture itself cannot develop sufficiently unless a country has a strong industrial base Nor must it be forgotten that in the war against Pakistan in 1971 India's victory was due, not merely to superior generalship and the gallantry of the Indian soldiers, but to its superiority in the sphere of industry and defence production, in which it was more advanced than Pakistan, and if the war had continued longer, this advantage would have counted even more

Apart from bilateral relations, India and the Soviet Union have had much in common in their attitude towards vital international questions, such as the opposition to racialism, *apartheid*, and other forms of aggression, of which the sickening conflict in Vietnam was a flagrant example and the striving for a new international economic order

To sum up, if India's relations with the Soviet Union can be called 'a pro-Soviet stance', it is fully explained by the developments in the past thirty years when the Soviet Union showed itself to be a sincere and reliable friend Rather than attempt to 'correct' this stance, one hopes that President Carter will address himself to the question why Indo-American relations have not been marked by anything like the same consistency and warmth

At the dawn of Indian independence, the omens for Indo-American friendship were good India's national leaders had been touched by the sympathy of the American people, by and large, in India's freedom struggle In particular, they were grateful to President Roosevelt for prodding the stubborn Winston Churchill to take some steps towards the granting of independence to India Churchill resented these suggestions, so much so that on one occasion he exclaimed 'Take India if that is what you want, but remember you will have a blood-bath'

It is unfortunate that the relations between independent India and the USA have not developed in the manner in which they were expected to For this there were various reasons Mr Chester Bowles,

who was American Ambassador to India for a number of years, once observed that the basic difference between the American and the Soviet policy towards India was that, unlike the US government, the Soviet government had understood from the outset the geopolitical importance of India Whichever criterion one applies, i e , location, population, size, resources, past heritage or present policy, India is a country which counts and is bound to count more in the future This is a fact which the USSR has realised One hopes that President Carter's visit to India, short as it is but longer than to any other country included in his present tour, will enable him, too, to realise this and to 'correct' his government's policies accordingly

(Feature Unit, 1978)

PART V
MUSINGS

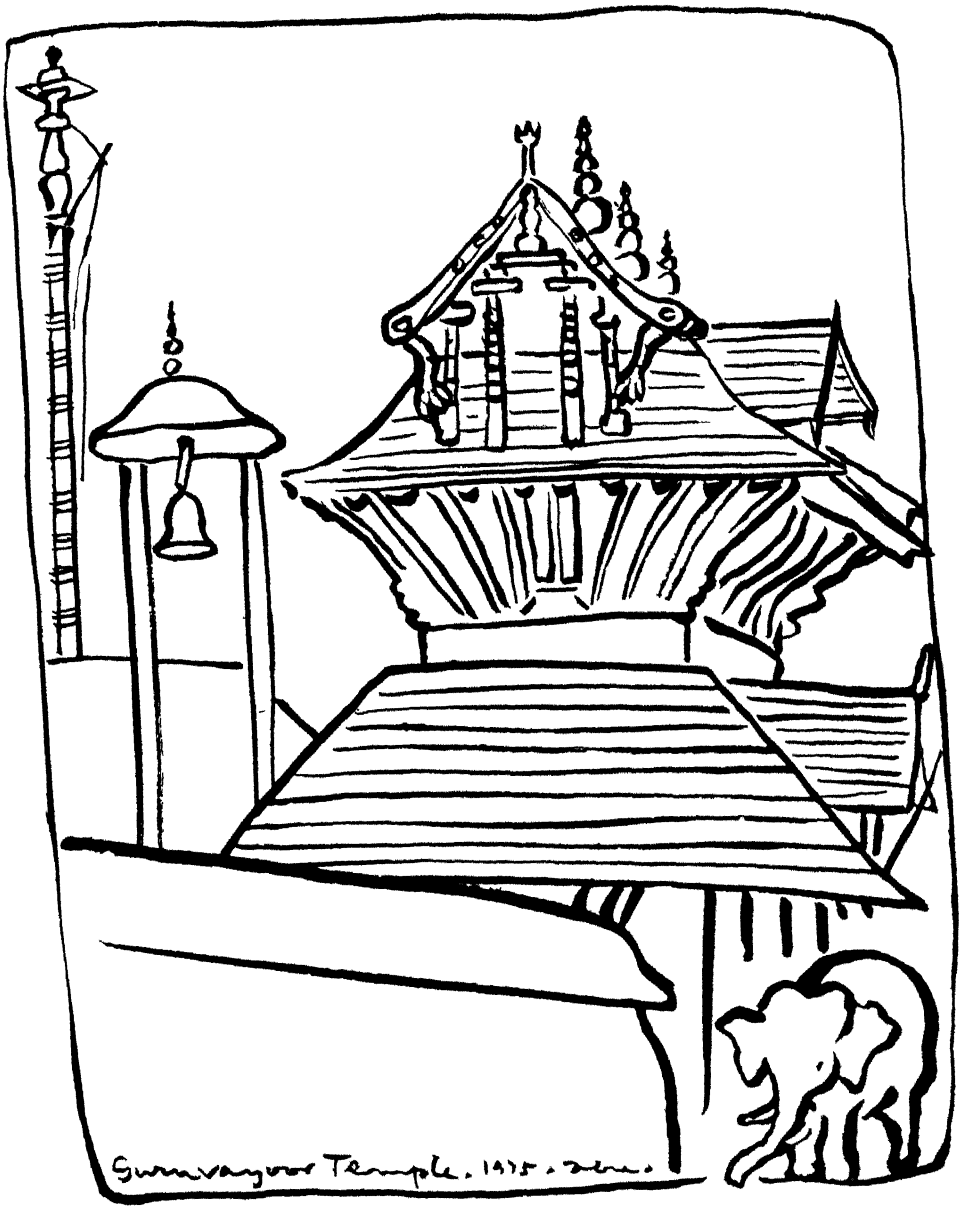
62. Gods, Elephants and Men

It was a sensational week The results of the general elections of 1967 were published Many of the mighty, both of the government and the opposition, fell Many stalwarts were cast out by the electorate Among them were such veterans as Acharya Kripalani, V K Krishna Menon, N G Ranga, and Renu Chakravarti The so-called syndicate of the Congress crumbled. S.K Patil, 'the uncrowned King of Bombay', was defeated Atulya Ghosh went down and, together with him, the Congress majority in Bengal. Kamaraj, the President of the Congress, was beaten, and that in his own constituency by a student leader 'This', exclaimed E M S. Namboodiripad, 'is the b-b-best piece of news'

In Kerala a seven-horsed chariot led by E M.S won the political race, leaving an exhausted and dissension-ridden Congress far behind. The optimist took heart from the fact that as a single party the Congress won the largest percentage of votes No such consolation was available to its rival, the Kerala Congress, which had the distinction of forfeiting the largest number of deposits

The Government of Kerala became many-horsed too The Marxist horse began to set the pace because of its numerical strength and its ideological fervour. The resourceful jocky, who led his horse to an exciting victory, had the grace to say that his team would ride within the four corners of the Constitution Before long, however, he adopted the motto, 'Bharanam and Samaram', i e , 'Govern and struggle' (against the Central government) Evidently, E.M.S is a believer in the French precept that the Constitution is like a virgin which can yield fruit only when it is violated.

During the election week, I happened to visit Calicut, Tellicherry and Cannanore in the north and Kottayam, Trivandrum and Pandalam in the south. There was great excitement everywhere Even children were hugging the radio in houses where there was one, and large crowds had assembled in front of shops and restaurants to listen to the results of the elections coming hourly over the air This, however, caused no more than a ripple on the tranquil surface of life in


Guruvayoor Temple. 1975.

Ottapalam There what affected the people more was the destruction of two elephants, Balakrishnan and Ayyappan, who had themselves destroyed a number of men Some people bewailed their fate, many felt relieved, and all were deeply stirred Anyhow, the people of Ottapalam were happy to see the name of their town splashed on the front page of two successive issues of the leading journal of Malabar, *Mathrubhumi*

The tragedy, in which Ayyappan and Balakrishnan were the protagonists, was enacted in an atmosphere, charged with religious emotion Ottapalam was celebrating the festival of the year, Pooram, in honour of its patron goddess, the Bhagavati of Chenakkathur From the beginning there were signs that all was not well While the flag was being hoisted in front of the temple, the rope broke and it had to be rehoisted When the procession started on the eve of the festival, the velichapadu, a temple functionary who gets God-intoxicated on the right occasions and dances in a frenzy, had a pain in the region of his heart, and another velichapadu took his place It has been the practice for the velichapadu, followed by a richly caparisoned elephant and accompanied by drummers and musicians, to visit every Hindu home in the neighbourhood and to collect, as a gift to the goddess (and also to himself), a para of paddy or rice kept solemnly at the gate of every house Ammu, my granddaughter, lay awake till the small hours of the morning to see the arrival of the procession It came, but what she wanted to see most, the elephant, was missing And the velichapadu did not seem possessed by God.

People wondered whether there was anything amiss The next day their worst apprehensions were confirmed

Elephants came from different towns to take part in the festival Among them was a splendid tusker, Balakrishnan, owned by one Narayana Iyer known as Anapattar or elephant-Brahmin, because his joy lies in keeping elephants and his business in buying and selling them Balakrishnan was being led to the temple by its old keeper, Kunhan Pillai, who was sitting on its back By its side, a little behind, walked the newly employed assistant, Narayanan Nair, with a spear in his hand Kunhan Pillai warned Narayanan Nair not to go too close to the elephant, flaunting his spear Hardly had he said this when the elephant turned round with lightning rapidity, seized Narayanan Nair with its trunk, hoisted him in the air, then threw him on the ground and trampled him and reduced him to pulp Kunhan Pillai bent down to dig his long knife into the elephant's feet so as to bring it under control But while doing so he slipped and fell down An elephant cannot

resist trampling on a prostrate object, however dear it might be to him Balakrishnan placed his foot on its keeper, crushing his bones 'Don't, Balakrishnan, don't', groaned Kunhan Pillai Hearing the familiar voice, the elephant stood like a stone, striken by conscience, but seeing that Kunhan Pillai was dead it decided, like Lady Macbeth, that what's done is done and cannot be undone, and walked away philosophically, meditating on the mysteries of life and death

The road was full of people, including the worshippers at the temple, who ran hither and thither Some jumped into a well Three of them were pulled out alive and one, three days later, dead Balakrishnan, however, was in no mood to cause more havoc. Only one unfortunate Sadhu , one of whose slippers had fallen away while running, bent down to pick it up, and the elephant, suspecting that he was out to do it harm, trampled him to death It ran a long way and dipped into a tank, as an elephant always does after killing someone, as if to wash away its crime,

> Which the multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red

In the meantime, the police in Palghat were informed They lost no time to arrive on the spot and shot the delinquent down

Balakrishnan's exploits were the talk of the town and election news was almost completely blacked out

Hardly had the people begun to recover from their shock when another tragedy took place Another elephant, Ayyappan, belonging to the Cherpalcherry temple, began to be dressed up for the festival By its side were two other elephants who were also being caparisoned I used to play with one of them, Kuttikrishnan, as a baby and feed it with coconut (how sweetly it used to open its mouth!) when it belonged to my brother-in-law, R.M Palat. Suddenly, Ayyappam attacked Kuttikrishnan and the other elephant, and they broke themselves loose and ran across the countryside, creating panic but causing no harm Ayyappan now vented its fury on its keeper, Vasu Pillai, who had been decorating it, and gored him to death The other keeper, Raghavan Nair, who was sitting on its back, jumped down and escaped with his life Then the elephant went off on a spree, running all over the countryside, peeping into people's huts, pulling the plantain trees down and helping itself to the coconuts, the bananas and whatever it could lay hands on Practised elephant-keepers tried to bring it under control but in vain One, braver than the others,

approached the elephant with a bunch of plantations The elephant took the plantains and gobbled them up Encouraged by its attitude, the man patted it on its trunk when it gave him a violent push which sent him whirling into a pit many yards away In its unappeased anger, the elephant tried to gore him with its tusks, but the pit was too narrow for the tusks to enter, and the man escaped, with a few of his bones broken Again, the police was summoned The District Collector of Palghat, accompanied by the District Superintendent of Police and the Sub-Collector, Ottapalam, gave the owner of the elephant six hours to bring it under control, and later extended the time to nine hours When the time limit expired, the Collector ordered 'fire-, and the elephant fell down riddled with bullets In death, as in life, it looked majestic

The people of Ottapalam concluded that the Goddess of Chenakathur was angry Otherwise, why should she have taken a toll of half a dozen innocent lives and two precious elephants What had annoyed her? Was she angry because Ottapalam spurned the Congress candidate, an old Congress worker, and returned a little known Communist to the Assembly? Could it be that the Goddess enacted this tragedy in order to show her displeasure at the triumph of a Party which its opponents love to denounce as godless? But E M S Namboodiripad assured the faithful among his followers, including the devotees of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate, that after all if there is a God he cannot be legislated out of existence Nor, he said in the same breath, lest he should be dubbed revisionist, as he used to be by the ultras in his Party, can God, if there is a God, be brought into existence by an Act of Parliament.

Those who believed in a Supreme Power are still free to say with Browning that God's in heaven, though all's not right with the world

(*Shankar's Weekly*, 1975)

63. Thoughts on a Golden Wedding

It is not given to many couples to celebrate their golden wedding So, when a man has reached this summit, his thoughts, and hers, may be of some interest to other married couples who are still clambering up the slopes and even to those who are nervous of committing matrimony and getting a life sentence

When Lynn Fontanne, well-known American actress, and her husband, Alfred Lunt, equally well known as an actor, celebrated their golden wedding, a correspondent, expressing astonishment that they should be stuck together for 50 years, which not all actors and actresses do, asked her whether she had ever contemplated divorce 'Divorce, not,' she replied, 'murder yes!' In fact, they were an ideal and married couple and it is in their honour that the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre has been established in New York

Our own marriage took place on April 21, 1923 I was then 25 and she 21 Ours was an arranged marriage All I had seen of the bride before the marriage was an execrable passport photograph

I have described in my book, *Many Worlds*, my first impressions of my bride 'I met Anujee for the first time at the marriage ceremony. She was a vision of beauty I was dazed with the sight of so much loveliness And all that was mine, mine! I could hardly believe it She seemed to answer perfectly to the description of the juvenile Malayalam poem I had written to my sister-in-law

'The bee, the lotus, the cloud, the conch-shell, the fish, the deer, the leaf of the banyan tree, the stem of the plantain tree, the yet unopened flower, silver moonlight and golden goblets—all these must dwell in harmony on my beloved' When I tied the *thali* on her, I touched her accidentally, and this sent an electric thrill through me I felt that we had lived a hundred, a thousand lives together, and now, those were going to merge into a new life I felt like the Persian poet who wrote·

Four eyes met There are changes in two souls
And now I cannot remember whether he is a man and I a woman
Or he a woman and I man

All I know is,
There were two, love came, and there is one

That ecstasy could not of course last, though it still shoots up in rare moments It has given way to the steady glow of affection born out of 50 years of shared experiences in India and abroad

I sometimes wonder whether Anujee would have married me, if she had known what was in store for her if some astrologer, and she is a believer in astrology, had predicted that she would have two sets of twins, that she would be a mother of six before she was 30, a grandmother by the age of 40, and a greatgrandmother soon after she was 60 Or, if he had warned her of the sleepless nights she would have to spend by the side of two of her children, who were weaklings in their infancy and whose very survival was a miracle, and of another whose recovery from illness was also a miracle wrought, she would say, more by prayers than by medicines, less by doctors than by herself, for it was her prayers that did it And what if she had known that in her 32nd year, when her father died and two of her sisters became widows, she too might have become a widow but for the solicitude with which she nursed her husband through three agonising weeks, when he lay stricken with smallpox in a remote frontier station And that in her early 60s she would have to sit by his side when he lay between life and death for many weeks after an operation for the fracture of his legs

What would have been her feelings if the astrologer had foretold that for the 40 years of her husband's service she would have to live the life of a gipsy going from one part of India to another, from Trichinopoly and Tiruppattur in the South to Peshawar and Baluchistan in the North, and, in later years, from one country to another, and that this wandering life would continue even after his retirement She would certainly have been nervous if it had been predicted that she would have to accompany her husband to a dangerous spot called Fort Sandeman sandwiched between Afghanistan and Waziristan, where one of his predecessors, Col Gaisford, had been shot dead and his immediate successor, Col Barnes, was also murdered, or to Chungking, the war-time capital of China during the Second World War, when it was being subjected to terrific bombing by the Japanese. Yet she would have steeled herself to endure it all.

Anujee would have been prepared not only to endure this life but to enjoy it if she could have foreseen its compensations. The greatest

compensation was that wherever we were posted, the people, so different from one another, the Pathans and the Rajputs, the Baluchis and the Ceylonese, the Russians and the Chinese, the Hungarians and the Poles, would treat her with the greatest regard and affection The Pathans and the Baluchis would take her and, as a special gesture of friendliness, her husband too into their zenanas and introduced them to their womenfolk, who were normally in strict purdah

The British sahibs, too, relented towards her, even though she did not drink, dance and make herself merry Whenever she and her husband entered the Club at Fort Sandeman, of which he was the only Indian member and as Political Agent, President, the other members would say 'Waiter, bring a strong glass of whisky for Mr. Menon and a strong glass of water for Mrs Menon' And in Russia, she was a favourite so much so that the Soviet Prime Minister once proposed a toast 'To the best Ambassador in Moscow and her husband, Mr K P S Menon'

For her, life has not been a bed of roses All the drudgery of daily life fell, and still falls, upon her If she has had to live a gipsy life with her husband, it has been her job to do all the packing and unpacking, the winding up of the old house and the setting up of the new, the buying and selling of furniture, and the training and scolding of servants Hers, too, to try to make both ends meet—a difficult task, especially in retirement, when the once princely pension of the ICS does not carry one far and we still have to dispense hospitality beyond our means.

Would she, if she had known all this, have preferred to marry that affluent landlord from Palghat district on whom her parents had an eye? No, she says, it is sufficient for her to feel that in her husband's eye she has been, as she has been described in the dedication to my book, *Many Worlds*

'My constant companion in India and abroad who has shared all the experiences told in this book, making the sweet ones sweeter and the sour ones less sour and yet somehow remaining above and beyond them all'

In the world's eye too she has not been found wanting A reviewer of *Many Worlds*, Kainikkara Kumara Pillai, a noted writer and literary critic, has gone into superlatives over her He writes

"There is one figure that rises from these pages, which seems to outgrow the usual dimensions That is Anujee Always with him, always mindful of him and their children, tolerant, indulgent, protective, full of love and kindness and that quiet strength and fortitude, which is part of the very soul of woman—with them, among them,

moving with them and graciously allowing herself to be moved and swayed by them—and yet, in spite of all that, 'above and beyond them all'—always herself, aloof, unmoved, serene almost lonely in a secret world of her own, in tune with her God, to whom she prays regularly, not for specific boons but for the sheer joy and peace of that communion!

"This is the one picture in the gallery which Menon has elaborately painted It is almost a full length portrait, done in immortal colours It is more than a tribute of love, it is a reverential offering made to a twentieth century survival of the ancient ideal of Indian womanhood "

Anujee's own comment was that Kainikkara, in the kindness of his heart and with his literary flair, has turned a goose into a swan

(*Bhavan's Journal*, 1973)

64. Living with a Heaven-Bent Wife

Until recently I had not suspected that writing was contagious I have been writing all my life essays in school and college notes and drafts in the Secretariat, reports and despatches as a diplomat, and books and articles in retirement I did not know that Anujee had a flair for writing Once when we had a heated argument about something or other, I told her 'Remember that I am a writer and you aren't'

Whether that taunt went home or not I do not know, but she too has now blossomed out into an amateur writer An old friend of ours, K M Mathew, Chief Editor of the *Malayala Manorama*, told her that she had had an interesting life with her husband in various parts of the world, would she not write a series of articles on her experiences for the *Vanitha*? To my surprise, Anujee readily agreed The subject was too tempting for her to resist, namely, 'Living with a heaven-born husband' These articles were published in Malayalam in *Vanitha* Later, on the initiative of another old friend, S Ramakrishnan, they were published in the original English in the *Bhavan's Journal*

'Heaven-born' was one of the epithets, at once envious and scornful, which were hurled at the ICS in British days when its members regarded themselves as having been ordained by heaven to rule India and enjoyed vast prestige and power This article is entitled, 'Living with a heaven-bent wife' I must confess I have chosen the word 'heaven-bent' so that it may chime with 'heaven-born' I cannot assert that Anujee is bent on reaching heaven, but she is always conscious of heaven, or something beyond this mundane life 'Living with a heaven-bent wife' may be regarded as a compliment, or a rejoinder, to 'Living with a heaven-born husband'

I have mentioned in my autobiography, *Many Worlds*, that the first time I set eyes on Anujee was at the marriage ceremony I had heard of her earlier. Even as a girl in her teens she had a reputation for piety Her cousin, G K Chettur, was at Oxford with me I once asked him 'Why don't you marry Chinna' (That was Anujee's pet name in the family), 'your uncle's daughter? After all, she is your *murappennu*'

Murappennu means that entitled girl, the girl entitled to marry. He replied: 'How can I? She is always sitting and praying.'

I had heard of this tendency on her part from other sources too. One person, however, gave me a different picture of her. That was Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who came to Oxford in 1921 and who used to know her father, Sir C. Sankaran Nair, well. She used to call Anujee 'The Arab Horse' and thought she was a very spirited young girl. This neutralised in my mind the impression which Chettur had given me.

After marriage I discovered that Anujee conformed to both descriptions. Prayer was, and has always been, a necessity for her. Her prayer seemed very different from the kind of prayer in which we used to indulge as children. All the children of our household would sit together and loudly repeat a hundred times some holy word such as Namassivaya(നമഃശിവായ), or Achuthananda Govinda (അച്യുതാനന്ദ ഗോവിന്ദ), or sing a hymn like Sankara Dhyana-prakaram Grahika Mee (ശങ്കരധ്യാനപ്രകാരം ഗ്രഹിക്കമേ), giving a graphic description of Siva from head to foot. Anujee, on the contrary, always prayed in silence and solitude. We would pray in the sitting room; she in a small dimly-lit room, set apart for this purpose, or in some corner of the house where she could neither see, nor be seen by, others. And she concentrated on her prayer far more than we did.

Anujee, too, recited hymns or sacred slokas, but in a whisper. The purpose of her prayer seemed different too. In fact it had no ostensible purpose at all, whereas we always prayed for a purpose. As school boys we prayed most fervently at the time of our examinations and, in particular, when the examination in Arithmetic, a subject in which I was hopelessly weak, was approaching. Our prayer answered to its definition by Socrates, 'the art of asking and giving'. You ask God for some favour and He gives it. For the rest, our religious exercises consisted in the daily reading of the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha. This stirred our minds and hearts, roused our imagination and broadened our outlook, but I cannot say it touched any deeply religious chord in us.

Anujee prays simply for the sake of praying. In her case prayer is indistinguishable from meditation. For one hour in the morning and again in the evening she is herself, 'far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife', wrapped up in the silence of infinity and in tune with it. This has given her a rare poise and balance which have been the envy of all who have known her.

Anujee's favourite time for prayer is at sunrise and sunset. Sunset,

however, is the favourite hour for cocktail parties and other diversions, especially amongst diplomats If she missed her evening prayer she would make up for it by praying before going to sleep Anujee has certain prayers which are specially suitable for the morning and others for the evening Once she was in a quandary We were in Leningrad during the 'white nights' in the month of June, when the sun neither rises nor sets and there is light for all the twenty-four hours of the day On such occasions she would pray at any odd hour and leave it to the Almighty to take it as her morning or evening quota

Basically, her conception of God is impersonal Yet, she has a personal God, or Goddess, to whom she can turn in a crisis, namely, the presiding deity of a small shrine in Ottapalam, Chathankander Kavu Anujee is convinced that this Goddess has come to her help in many emergencies She once appeared in a dream even to unbelieving me When I was lying stricken with smallpox in a small town called Abbottabad on the North West Frontier, the Goddess appeared in a dream She was old and frail, with an unearthly glow on her face, and seemed a little angry, and she asked me 'Why are you treating my child like this?" Evidently she was referring to Anujee as her child I mentioned this dream to Anujee She did not know what it meant any more than I

In my childhood I used to imagine heaven as an abode of perpetual bliss. A gripping short story, written by Rabindranath Tagore, has exposed another view of heaven A highly virtuous person prays to God to let him have a glimpse of heaven in order to know what it is like The prayer is answered At first he is delighted to be among the gods, but he feels increasingly bewildered by their demeanour There they were, so smug and complacent and beatific, totally oblivious of the plight of men and the sorrows of the world He longs to get back to the earth, with its striving, toiling, erring, faltering fellow-men and share their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, triumphs and disillusionments To be fair, Anujee's conception of heaven is very different from the caricature in Tagore's story

Whether the constant company of my heaven-bent wife has enhanced my prospects of entering heaven or not, it has certainly done much to turn this earth into a heaven for me

(*Vanitha*, 1978)

65 How I Keep Fit at Seventy-Five

My friends often ask me how I manage to keep so fit at the age of 75 The Bible would have it that three score years and ten form man's allotted span The old Hindu benediction puts it higher 'May you see a thousand full moons!', i e , 'May you live up to 84!' I bestowed this blessing on Sir Amin Jung, a distinguished friend in Hyderabad when he was 70 Fourteen years later he wrote to me 'I have fulfilled your behest and seen a thousand full moons May I see a few more?' He saw 200 more

I hope this article will be of some interest to the old who are getting older and are viewing the advent of old age with mixed feelings I hope it will also bring some amusement to the young who regard old age with disdain in the same way as a lusty bachelor regards matrimony

It is not how long one lives that matters but how In the seventh decade of my own life I have been busy writing and speaking and travelling, and that with a fractured leg All my books except one were written after I reached the age of 60 My latest book, *Twilight in China*, was published last year In 1969 I attended the centenary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, and in 1970 the centenary celebrations of Lenin, in Moscow, Delhi and a number of other cities And at the age of 66 my wife and I undertook a journey round the world

The good health which I enjoy now is the more striking because in my younger days I used to be a weakling then the insurance premium on my life would have been pretty heavy Having had no child for 17 years after my elder brother was born, my mother brought me up like a hothouse plant and refused to let me join in games or take any exercise whatsoever At Oxford I took to rowing and riding but I did not distinguish myself in either Though riding stood me in good stead, when I did the only thing which I have ever done in the nature of a feat, a 125-day overland journey, mostly on foot and horseback, from India to China, described in my book, *Delhi-Chungking*

When I appeared for my medical test in London after passing the ICS examination I was still weak and pigeon-chested The medical examiner told me bluntly that if I had been an Englishman he would

not have passed me but, he added, 'since India is your home you might as well go there and die' And when N R Pillai appeared after me, he exclaimed, 'Here's another specimen!' Yet N R and I were somehow fated to outlive many of our robust contemporaries

My experience is that the secret of longevity lies in a judicious combination of work and rest 'Work', says a Cyprus proverb, 'is hard, no work is harder' I have not suffered from the hardest ordeal in life, no work

After retirement, a number of congenial assignments have come to me unsought Fortunately, none of my assignments has tied me down to the desk My work, therefore, has never become drudgery and I have time to rest, to relax, to reflect on the multi-coloured tragi-comedy of life I am as unashamedly addicted to a siesta as Winston Churchill used to be even in the most trying days of the war Even as Foreign Secretary I used to have my siesta, and Jawaharlal Nehru seldom disturbed me between 2 and 4 The one occasion when I missed my siesta was when Prime Minister Kosygin came to India and fixed 3 o'clock for a public meeting, at which I was to preside In welcoming him, I said that on that day he had done something which even Jawaharlal Nehru had not dared he kept me awake at 3!

I have a clear conscience in respect of my siesta, for I am always up before dawn, think hard and work hard till 9 30, when we have breakfast, and then work again till 1 30 The evening goes quickly with the family, with whom I go out for a drive or a walk, and have talk and music, and it is midnight before we sleep

Anyone who wishes to live long must pay a little attention to diet I am by no means a small eater In fact I eat more than before after my stay in the Soviet Union, seeing how well the Russians eat The three redoubtable octogenarians of Kerala during the last decade, who have left a permanent mark on our public life, namely, K P Kesava Menon, Mannath Padmanabhan and Pattom Thanu Pillai, were great eaters too

What matters is not how much you consume but what. I avoid fried things like poison, I prefer them steamed, baked or boiled I prefer our Kerala curries to the delicious but greasy curries of North India I take Iddly but not Dosa I take Chapati but not white bread I have a little rice in the afternoon and none at all at night I take little butter and no ghee Milk does not suit me but I enjoy buttermilk which I have for breakfast and lunch I take plenty of fresh vegetable and fruit, my favourite being papaya, thus warding off an excess of cholestorol

I was born in a puritan family When I went to Oxford, my father

told me that I should abstain from drinking and smoking When we heard of the end of First World War and the armistice came, there was an orgy of rejoicing in my college, Christ Church It was on that day, the 11th November 1918, that I was persuaded to drink and smoke for the first time. I smoked moderately for 40 years that is till 1958 when my Russian doctors finally forbade me to smoke I have felt all the better for giving up smoking Drinks I have not given up Accommodating doctors even prescribe them for me in limited quantities, for my blood pressure is on the low side I enjoy a gimlet before lunch and a chota peg or two before dinner, provided it is Scotch In the matter of drinks I follow the advice of Confucius to a disciple who asked him, 'Master, is it proper for men to drink?' 'You may drink,' replied Confucius, 'but not to the point of mental confusion'

A factor deserving as much attention as diet is exercise Religiously I take certain exercises which pay special attention to breathing They were taught to me by a magnificent-looking physical instructress in a sanatorium in the Crimea Under that system, every part of the body is exercised, and the 30 odd exercises take no more than 13 minutes I take them every morning and often in the evening, and, to the amusement of my fellow-passengers, even in the train

But the body is not all The mind counts equally, if not more I refuse to get excited over trifles in my personal and public life

In public affairs there is much over which one has reason to be excited or depressed, but realising my limitations I have refused to jump into the fray of politics I have my favourites among politicians Jawaharlal Nehru continues to by my idol, though in the Bangladesh crisis of 1971 his daughter, Mrs Indira Gandhi almost eclipsed him with her poise, coolness, courage and perfect sense of timing I need hardly say that my *bete noire* among politicians is Richard Nixon I have the utmost contempt for politicking as distinguished from politics Yet I take comfort in the thought that politicking has been going on in all ages and climes and is one of the evils of human society No less a revolutionary than Danton once said in total disillusionment 'It is better to keep a flock of sheep on the hillside than to meddle in the affairs of men' I have a horror of rushing in where angels fear to tread

Is this attitude one of philosophic detachment or mulish indifference? Whatever it may be, I feel happy when I see that my writings have had a peripheral influence on some individuals Not long ago a friend who bears the same name and initials as myself wrote an appreciative, but not over-eulogistic, article about Saibaba in the

Mathrubhumi This brought me quite a number of letters from numerous 'admirers' Some were written with satisfaction, others in indignation One person wrote to me that I had always been his idol and he was pained to see that even his idol had the clay feet of superstition Another wrote that he had always thought that I was an agnostic like Nehru and that he was happy that at last Bhagwan had helped me to see the light The result is that I had to send a letter to the *Mathrubhumi* saying that I was not the author of the article in question

Do I pray? Yes and no! I recite verses from the *Gita* and from other Scriptures and poems including 'The Hound of Heaven', and this brings me much comfort As for praying in the normal sense of the word, Anujee does enough for us both For her, too, prayer does not mean what Socrates defined as 'the art of asking and giving', but meditation and a sense of communion with the Infinite This has been a major factor in her attaining the age of 70 with serenity and grace

(*Bhavan's Journal*, 1973)

66 Growing Old Without Getting Senile

Life has taught me many valuable lessons It is not possible for me to refer to them all in the space of an article, but there is one lesson for which, approaching eighty, I am particularly grateful Life has taught me how a man can grow old without getting senile

There are a handful of chronologically old men who have succeeded in remaining not merely mentally but physically young The most remarkable example is Morarji Desai As the whole world knows, he retains at the age of 82 a physical and mental agility which is the envy of much younger men

Another superb specimen is K P Kesava Menon, veteran freedom-fighter and Chief Editor of the *Mathrubhumi* His case is, in some ways, even more remarkable than Morarji Desai's He is a nonagenarian He is totally blind He does not observe dietetic, or any other rigorous, discipline In fact, he is one of the world's great eaters Every meal in his house is a feast He never took a vow of celibacy as Morarji Desai did in his early thirties He was a devoted but unlucky husband he lost his first wife and married her sister who, too, passed away in excruciating circumstances Yet, no public function in Kerala is now complete without the participation of this blind 93-year-old man He attends meetings, addresses them, speaks on AIR, carries on a vast correspondence, edits one of the most influential dailies in Kerala, and writes books and articles galore Sixteen of his books, including full length biographies of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru and a Life of Jesus Christ, which has been applauded even by Christian theologians, were written after he was stricken blind

I do not belong to this category of men K P Kesava Menon, like Morarji Desai, is not a man but a phenomenon But even an ordinary mortal can remain comparatively young in mind, even if he cannot prevent his body from getting old

Not long ago, there appeared in a Delhi newspaper a review of my book *Yesterday and Today*, under the title 'The Ageless Civilian' For a near-octogenarian, troubled with that sure symptom of advancing age, a sagging prostate gland, it was at once amusing and edifying to be called ageless

Physically I have not escaped the contributory factors of ageing I have suffered from a severe epidemic disease, a major accident, an internal abscess and two organic diseases If I have survived them and am none the worse for them, the credit goes largely to the doctors who looked after me It was a Pathan doctor of the I M S Col Sahibzada, who, in my 36th year, pulled me out of the jaws of death, which appeared in the form of a virulent attack of smallpox in the North-West Frontier Province It was a renowned Brahmin surgeon, Prof Doraswamy, who performed a brilliant operation on me for the fracture of my leg at the age of 65 and patched me up, though in this process one of my legs has become a little shorter than the other and I walk with a limp And it was a Russian surgeon, and that a woman—in fact 80 per cent of the doctors in the Soviet Union are women—who operated on me for an abscess Though it was in a most delicate part of the body, the operation was so skilfully and painlessly performed that I almost enjoyed it

Of the two organic diseases which afflicted me one was osteo-arthritis of the back, of which the symptom was a slipped, or perpetually slipping, disc I suffered from it for full ten years and had different kinds of treatment in different places in India, in China, in London, in Holland and in Hungary Nothing did me any good, and I was becoming an almost chronic invalid when I was posted to Moscow in 1952 There I put myself in the hands of the Russian doctors They put me through a course of one month's sulphur baths in three successive years in a lovely sanatorium on the shore of the Black Sea, viz , Sochi, which has been famous for its mineral springs ever since Roman days This has cured me completely, and I have not had the slightest suspicion of a backache since 1955

Another disease which afflicted me in my middle age was emphysema of the lungs It showed itself in shortness of breath, a perpetual irritating cough, occasional bouts of pneumonia and the periodical appearance of a drop of blood in the sputum Having examined me thoroughly my Russian doctors told me that I had lost the resilience of my lungs and that I would have to live with this malady for the rest of my life The only possible cure, they said, was a climatic cure And so they sent me off to the Crimea, which has the most bracing climate in the world, for a couple of months The result was a miracle A patch which had appeared in my right lung disappeared and I could breathe more freely and climb steps more easily than before And I have seldom had a cough since 1958

Soviet doctors are not content to cure you They also teach you

how to keep fit They believe that prevention is better than cure, whereas some doctors in other places, where the monetary motive comes first, are apt to think that from their point of view prevention is not a paying proposition Having got rid of the two organic diseases from which I had suffered I have forestalled their recurrence and managed to keep fit for the past twenty years by taking certain simple exercises and observing certain simple rules of diet, prescribed by Russian doctors

Age, or agelessness, however, depends, not only on the body, but equally, if not more, on the mind and brain and intellect In this respect, any more than in respect of my body, I cannot claim that I have remained altogether unaffected by the passage of years Sometimes I forget names, sometimes I forget faces, sometimes I do not know which belongs to which How I have envied Dr Boyd, Principal of the Madras Christian College, my own alma mater, who could remember every student who passed through his hands by his name and even by his nickname!

Age has aggravated my infirmity When I am making a speech my wife is in a state of nervous tension lest I should misuse one word or name for another My worst slip was in Sri Lanka in 1969, where I was invited to take part in the Centenary Celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi's birth At the end of my speech, in the course of which I stressed the immemorial friendship between India and Sri Lanka, I, instead of saying 'Long live Indo-Sri Lanka friendship', said, by force of habit, 'Long Live Indo-Soviet friendship' There was a burst of laughter accompanied by compassionate applause

I flatter myself, however, that as late as last year I could deliver an hour-long lecture without reference to a single note I never read out my speeches, I deliver them seemingly extempore The latest marathon lectures I delivered were those, instituted by the Jamia Millia Islamia in memory of an intimate friend of mine, Dr Saiyidain, and my subject was 'Changing Patterns of Diplomacy' I do not learn my lectures by heart, I do not even reduce them to writing before they are delivered, but I think them out so carefully for days together that every idea, every paragraph, almost every sentence sticks to my memory

I doubt, however, whether I shall be able to perform such feats in the future It has become a strain on my fractured leg to make a speech standing Nowadays, therefore, I speak sitting, with the permission of the Chair This gives me a comically venerable look

Writing, as distinct from speaking, I enjoy as much as ever.

Yesterday and Today contains as varied a collection of articles as I have ever written—and they were all written during the past three years—and had as warm a reception from the public as any of my earlier books In fact I am astonished at the number of books I have written, and all but one were written after I retired from service at the age of 63 Chronologically they were *Delhi-Chungking, Russian Panorama, The Flying Troika, Many Worlds, Journey Round the World, The Lamp and the Lampstand, Russia Revisited, Lenin Through Indian Eyes, Sir C Sankaran Nair, Twilight in China, A Diplomat Speaks* and *Yesterday and Today Yesterday and Today* was published in 1976 and sold out in 1977, and the publishers tell me that there is good scope for a new edition

The British rulers of India had a theory alleging the early intellectual exhaustion of Indians Owing to the enervating tropical climate and for other reasons, the Indian, they used to say, was already past his prime by the time he was forty and he was finished by the age of fifty This theory was often invoked to justify the supersession of Indians by Englishmen in the more senior appointments and the need for the continuance of British rule As already mentioned, Mr Morarji Desai is a living refutation of this theory So is K P Kesava Menon There are hundreds of lesser men, too, who, serving in different walks of life, have exposed the hollowness of this theory

The best, and in fact the only, antidote to the onset of senility is continued interest in men and things Life has been defined as conscious contact with environment The vaster the contacts and the greater the consciousness of these contacts, the more fruitful and happy life is apt to be After retirement, when a man's contacts usually diminish, I have been fortunate enough to hold a number of assignments, none of which has increased my bank balance but all of which have increased my contact with life in various aspects As a Member of the UPSC Board for interviewing candidates for the IAS and the IFS for seven years I was able to keep in touch with the working of the minds of the young generation As Chairman of the Indian Statistical Institute I came into contact with some top scientists, Indian and foreign As Vice-Chairman, and later Chairman, of the Sangeet Natak Akademi I have come to know some of our great singers, dancers and actors and to appreciate more than ever before the range and variety of our cultural heritage As Chairman of the International Centre of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan I have had the privilege of the friendship of some men and women, who are dedicated

to the preservation of India's cultural heritage and are themselves its living embodiments As President of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society with its thousand branches spread all over India I have been able to continue, in an unofficial capacity, the mission of promoting Indo-Soviet friendship, to which the last nine years of my service as Ambassador to the USSR were dedicated, and to maintain my interest in international affairs At home, in Kerala, I always have the rejuvenating company of one or more of our children, grandchildren, and greatgrandchildren And always I have the company of my wife, who can truly be called my ageless companion

Has religion played a part in resisting the onset of senility? Frankly, not much in the ordinary sense of the word As the reviewer of my book who coined the phrase, 'The Ageless Civilian', has observed, I have no use for what he called 'those gaseous mystical abracadabra' which often pass for religion, nor have I any faith in those god-men, as distinguished from men of god, who proliferate in our country But if God stands for the ultimate in Truth, Goodness and Beauty—Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram—I hope I too can count myself as a humble and, at least would-be votary of God, even as Jawaharlal Nehru, who openly called himself a pagan, was And I hope Chitragupta, the Great Reckoner, will jot this down as a plus mark in my ledger

(*Art of Living*, 1978)

67. The Home-Coming

Appunni has come home He came home in a wooden casket, covered with wreaths from President Tito downwards His last official designation was Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of India to the Republic of Yugoslavia and concurrently accredited as Ambassador to the Republic of Greece But this mouth-filling and head-swelling title had no effect on him, he continued to be Appunni to the end of his life As Mr Surendra Pal Singh, former Minister of State, External Affairs, with whom he had worked closely, wrote to me, 'P N Menon had in him certain charming old-world human qualities which endeared him to all he came in contact with'

That diplomat is least successful who looks and poses as a diplomat Appunni looked like a gentleman farmer who had strayed into the field of diplomacy Now he rests, as he would have wished to rest, in a secluded spot, which my wife and I had marked out for ourselves, within a few yards of the sacred Bharatha river on the outskirts of an obscure town, Ottapalam.

Appunni was essentially a home-bird He was, however, destined to fly over three continents and serve in places as far afield as Paris and Phnom Penh, Delhi and Damascus, Lhasa and Belgrade, Nanking and San Francisco Wherever he was, his heart pined for his homeland —and home He was an Indian, and a Keralite, to the tips of his fingers

Appunni was seldom able to spend much time at home In the spacious days of the ICS, which was predominantly British, a member of the ICS who did not go 'home' on long leave, generally for 8 months and occasionally for 18, once every 5 years was regarded as queer Indeed, he would be reminded that it was high time that he took leave Our present leave rules are less liberal; the pressure of work is greater, and an officer is seldom able to avail himself of the full leave due to him He is sometimes ordered to proceed 'expeditiously' from one spot to another. Appunni himself went from San Francisco to Cambodia, Cambodia to New Delhi and New Delhi to Yugoslavia And expeditiously he came home on his last journey in

life in a special plane, placed at the disposal of his family by the Yugoslav government from Belgrade to Rome, and then in an Air India Boeing from Rome to Trivandrum From Trivandrum to Ottapalam he came in a van which was considerately placed at our disposal by the Government of Kerala The van took the body and the mourners over 220 miles of crowded and rain-soaked road to Ottapalam in record time by 2 a m

One journey, however, Appunni had alone at leisure That was his journey to Lhasa in 1956 to take up his post as India's Consul-General in Tibet That journey from Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, took him three weeks on foot and on horseback across the formidable Nathula Pass Some years later it fell to him to receive the Dalai Lama, who had sought political asylum in India, on the Sino-Indian frontier and escort him to Delhi

Appunni was tipped as Ambassador to Japan when death snatched him away Latterly death seemed to have its baleful eye on our diplomats in Eastern Europe, for it claimed another very able and charming officer, Mr Lukose, who was serving in Bulgaria, and also that better-known politician-cum-diplomat, Mr D P Dhar, in Moscow Among the condolence letters I received the most touching was from Mr Lukose's nonagenarian mother, a brilliant lady who was the first woman from Kerala to become a graduate, the first woman to become a member of the Legislative Council and the first woman to be Surgeon-General Her only daughter had died a few years previously in a tragic accident

A couple of weeks ago I wrote to Mrs Lukose condoling over the death of her only son, and, within a fortnight, it was her turn to write to me, condoling over the death of my youngest son-in-law

Seeing Appunni's face, so still and calm and almost smiling when the lid of the coffin was removed, and thinking of his life in some of the most exciting capitals of the world, I thought of the line in Shakespeare 'After life's fitful fever he sleeps well' I quoted it to a great friend of mine, Abraham Eapen, who was by my side at Appunni's cremation and he thought it was a lovely line So it is, but it was not particularly apposite to Appunni's life, which by no stretch of language could be called 'fitful fever' It was neither fitful nor feverish To all outward appearances it was almost placid, but the ease and grace with which he lived and moved concealed a distinction and strength of character which Jawaharlal Nehru was among the first to recognise

Appunni was among the earliest recruits to the Indian Foreign Ser-

vice He was interviewed by a special Selection Board, consisting of Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Sir Hugh Weightman and myself Thereafter, the candidates recommended by the Board were interviewed by Jawaharlal Nehru, who had just formed the interim Government of India He classified the candidates into three categories, 'outstanding', 'good' and 'fair' One of the two candidates in the 'outstanding' category, the other is still in service, was Appunni Nehru was more percipient than Appunni's first Ambassador, Sardar H S Malik who remarked, in the course of his otherwise very appreciative confidential report, that 'P N Menon is not one of the world's workers' The fact is that he worked hard but he did not make a fetish, still less a show, of work, as some people are inclined to do

I was told that just before Appunni's body left Belgrade there was a touching ceremony, organised by the Yugoslav Foreign Office and the diplomatic corps, at which fervent tributes were paid to him Those diplomats, who knew him well and wished to do so, stood guard on the body turn by turn Among them was the Chinese Ambassador Was this, people wondered, a gesture of purely personal friendship or did it have any political import? Or did it merely show that Death allays all antipathies?

Among the principal mourners over Appunni's death must be reckoned Lobo, his dog A great Alsatian, it was his companion in Phnom Penh, Delhi and Belgrade Lobo will now have a new abode, Peking, and a new master, but an old friend and playmate, Appunni's son

I find it strange that I should be writing so dispassionately, or writing at all, about Appunni so soon after his death, when I should be overwhelmed with grief at his sudden passing The fact is that I have taken courage from my daughter, his wife The one thing which oppressed me when I heard the news of his death was how she would take this terrible calamity. For the first 12 hours after she came to our home, I did not have the heart even to go and see her, I thought it best to leave her to nurse her grief alone in her room. But her life is rooted in faith, and her days are sanctified by prayer, however full they might be with the chores of a diplomat's wife, which she discharged punctiliously

Malini is a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna She could find a few kindred souls in the Ramakrishna Ashrams in California, when her husband was India's Consul-General in San Francisco Even in Greece, to which he was concurrently accredited, she managed to find one, Madame Nemzoglou, the widow of the former King's physician

We also had the pleasure of meeting her on our visit to Athens a couple of years ago and were tremendously impressed by her She told us that she had explored many a religion and many a system of philosophy, but none brought such peace to her mind and soul as the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

The intensity of my daughter's faith was described to me by my son, who went to Belgrade from Budapest soon after Appunni passed away, in a most poignant letter, 'Thuli's strength of spirit,' he wrote, 'is something indescribable There she lay a frail, white figure, giving rather than receiving, solace to the never-ending stream of people who came to see her So it was with the maid, who was sobbing violently, with various ambassadors' wives, who broke down, with the Ghana Ambassador, who just sat there, sobbing his heart out To all of them Thuli spoke quietly and gently and held their hands, and it was she who gave them strength So it was from the very beginning, I was told She calmly questioned the doctor whether an injection or massage would not revive the heart (The doctor explained that after the lapse of about ten minutes that had occurred the brain would have been irretrievably damaged, in any case) I was told that her face altered for a fleeting moment when the body was being removed to the hospital, but then she immediately went to her prayer-room, and emerged in half-an-hour completely serene So she was during the ceremony of honour and tribute that the Yugoslav government had arranged in the garden of the house on the morning of departure there she sat in a white saree, taking the hands of all those who came by And when at the foot of the aircraft she held up her hand to all of us there, it was, as Ammini and Lalitha said, more a benediction than a farewell For a little while she gave us strength, although we lesser mortals broke down again and again and again, but the personal experience of what spiritual strength can do has made us slightly greater beings than we otherwise are'

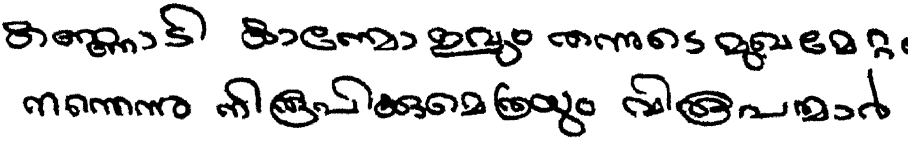
Sorrow can be of different kinds My granddaughter, Parvathi aged 12, heard of Appunni's death in the morning and showed no emotion In the evening, her class teacher, together with the Head Mistress, came to us to offer their condolences We asked her how she came to know of our bereavement Because, she said she found her pupil, Parvathi, silently crying in the class, and, when asked why she was crying, she mentioned the reason That was a case of silent sorrow My daughter's 'mature sorrow', as my wife put it, was very different from the sentimental or even mawkish sorrow, exhibited, and traditionally expected to be exhibited, by widows on such occasions And as time

passed, I found, to my relief, that it did not exclude even laughter Men may come and men may go, it seemed to say, but life goes on for ever And behind life stands God

68. Yesterday and Today

It has been said that old age begins when regrets take the place of dreams It is then that a man begins to think how much better yesterday was than today

Remember that this is an old man speaking, well beyond the Biblical span of three score and ten Such a man's daily regret begins when he looks at the mirror and finds how changed he is, unless he belongs to that class of people, of whom Kunchan Nambiar, the great Malayalam poet, said



i e , until an ugly person looks at a mirror he thinks himself to be most handsome

Recently I had a strange experience I was invited to deliver the inaugural lecture at the opening of the Bandaranaike Centre of International Studies in Colombo A flittering gathering had assembled in the glittering Bandaranaike Memorial Hall which was a gift from the Chinese to the Ceylonese Government, and Mrs Bandaranaike, the gracious Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, presided over the function I am no stranger to Sri Lanka I served there from 1929 to 1933 as the Representative of the Government of India In announcing the forthcoming opening of the Centre, most of the papers in Sri Lanka published a photograph of mine, taken there more than 40 years ago I could not help thinking how much more presentable I was then. My face today is almost a caricature of what it used to be

Yet the comments in the newspapers of Sri Lanka on my address, the subject of which was 'The Passing of an Era', made me feel young. *The Ceylon Observer* published the entire speech in three successive issues, and Mr Mervin De Silva, a leading commentator, wrote a 3-column article in *The Observer* which began poetically thus

'A single long-stemmed rose, full-blown and exquisite, combining nuances of colour, form and fragrance to form the perfect whole, held in a vase of the finest cut-glass That was how yesterday's inaugural lecture of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies seemed to me' When I read this encomium the years fell away and I felt as young in spirit as in my thirties!

Youthfulness and senility are essentially a state of mind To quote Milton

The mind is its own place and can make
A heaven of hell, a hell of heaven

The tragedy of the modern world is that the mind is not allowed to remain in its own place for long The world comes rushing into it It is a truism to say that the world has become small It has shrunk Let me draw on my own experience to show how much the world has shrunk My first voyage to England in 1918 took 65 days My first voyage to Russia in 1952 took 28 days My first air journey to Russia in 1954 took 28 hours My last air journey last September took 6 hours And in a year or two, when the supersonic planes come into vogue, Moscow will be within 2½ hours of Delhi One will then be able to leave Delhi after breakfast, attend a Conference in Moscow and even see a ballet in the Bolshoi Theatre and return to Delhi in time for dinner, as Moscow time is 2½ hours behind Indian time

Though travel is speedy, travelling is expensive, and there are not many who can afford it This is not so necessary either Mohammed said that if the mountain will not go to Mohammed, Mohammed will go to the mountain If you cannot go round the world, the world will come to you The difficulty is to resist it It greets you at dawn in the morning newspaper and titillates you or shocks you with news of bizarre happenings in the most distant corners of the world, and you feel dazed I myself make a point of never reading the newspapers or listening to the radio before breakfast. Whatever thinking or reflection I have to do, I do between our early morning tea at 6 and breakfast at 9 30 To me those hours are sacred Even my wife does not dare to encroach on my privacy Fortunately the morning hour is sacred for her too, for that is the time when she communes with God Then both she and I are at peace with the world and with ourselves in our respective ways. Then we feel that, when all is said and done, tomorrow can be better than today and that today is not much worse, and is in many respects better, than yesterday.

To say this at the present time may seem a cruel joke, for the people are suffering from multifarious hardships, such as rising prices and shortage of goods These phenomena, however, are not peculiar to India To a large extent they are the outcome of world factors Recently *Time*, a well-known American magazine, wrote, If the present sky-rocketting prices continue, the American middle class will be wiped out and millions of Americans will be reduced to eating dog-food ' The difference is that what is dog-food in America will be godsend to millions of famished Indians

But there was a time when people used to die without having even dog-food to eat In the last century, famine used to occur, almost once every ten years, with distressing regularity Why, as late as in 1943, three million people died in Bengal alone in what has come to be known as 'the man-made famine' Then I saw, with my own eyes, what famine means On my way by train from Delhi to Calcutta, whence I was to fly to Chungking, the war-time capital of China, to take up my first diplomatic appointment, I saw crowds of hungry human beings, all skin and bone, dragging themselves to the nearest dustbin and scrambling for crumbs of food At the same time, I saw well-dressed men, issuing out of the railway restaurant car, and licking their lips after a hearty meal Then, for once, I felt the instincts of a terrorist rising within me

Such things which happened yesterday are inconceivable today or tomorrow whatever some political Cassandras might say

If 3 million people were killed by famine in 1943, 3 million people used to die every year as a result of malaria Malaria was not the sole killer Plague was rampant in the winter, cholera in the summer and smallpox all the year round One of my duties as Under Secretary to the Resident at Hyderabad in 1925 and 1926 was to go round the Residency Bazar in December and January, supervising the rat-killing campaign and visiting plague patients In Kerala we were free from plague, but next door in Coimbatore plague was an annual feature We used to attribute our immunity from plague to the benevolence of the Goddess Bhagavathi, whom we propitiated more sedulously than our neighbours

If these dreadful epidemics have been controlled another ailment has become common, namely, heart disease One of the main causes of heart trouble is the prevalence of tension The 18th century used to be called the Age of Reason, and the 19th century was the Age of Complacency The 20th century may be called an Age of Tension. Tension of all kinds, internal tension, international tension, tension in

the family, tension among friends, tension in one's own heart It would take too long to analyse its causes, but there is little doubt that the primary cause is the absence of leisure, or the inability to use it

Aristotle once drew a distinction between work, play and leisure Work he defined as something which you did for the sake of something else, and play as mere reaction from work Leisure, which he regarded as higher and nobler than both work and play, he defined as the employment of time in an activity for its own sake How the absence of leisure has been affecting government servants was recently shown in a statistical study made by Dr Caroli, the well-known heart surgeon in Delhi He observed that the largest number of deaths among government servants occurred during the first 2 or 3 years after their retirement Away from the office, with no despatch boxes in front and no clerks and peons and stenographers to order about, many a servant, on retirement, finds himself bored, and the ultimate penalty of boredom is death It is necessary not only for government servants, but for people in all walks of life, and particularly for politicians, to develop a taste for something which will enable them, to quote Aristotle again, to employ time for its own sake This is conducive not only to longevity but a sense of proportion, a feeling of contentment and that inner poise and serenity which our ancient sages called yoga Literally yoga means balance.

It is this ingredient which is sadly lacking in our personal lives today, and even more in the international field If only we can recapture it, life tomorrow, with all the scientific and technological advance which man has made, can indeed be glorious, otherwise the prospects are dismal As T S Eliot has put it,

The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness,
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence,
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust

69. What's Wrong With Us?

(This is a letter, slightly abridged, which the author wrote to every member of the Indian Foreign Service in September, 1952, just before he relinquished the office of Foreign Secretary to take up the post of Ambassador in Moscow It was published as an article in the *Indian Express* in 1973)

When I took over as Foreign Secretary in 1948 there was no Foreign Service, nor did we know what it would look like and what its composition was going to be We were then a motley crowd some were from the ICS, some from the Foreign and Political Department and some from the armed forces, a handful were recruited through the open competitive examination, and there were a few overaged candidates selected by a specially constituted board How we were all going to be fitted into the Foreign Service, and in what seniority, we did not know Indeed we wondered how a homogeneous service could ever emerge out of such heterogeneous elements

Moreover, we were not sure of our prospects in the Foreign Service Was diplomacy in India going to be handled essentially by career diplomats, as in the United Kingdom, or was it going to be a half-amateur, half professional affair, as in the USA? Again, as in the USA, would the spoils system creep into India? Would there arise a distinction between sheep and goats, between official and non-official heads of Missions?

These were the questions that perplexed us, but we did not raise them as Service questions, for we knew that the interests of the country and not of the Service, should be paramount We left it to Jawaharlal Nehru, in whose realism and sense of fairness we all had absolute confidence, to evolve a system which would be best suited to India

As you know, Panditji has been experimenting with career men and politicians and on the whole we, career men, have done well Some of us have risen to the highest posts in the diplomatic service All of us may not be able to do brilliantly, we may not be able to pat Stalin on

the back, as only a philosopher can, or call Labour politicians by their Christian names, as only a comrade of theirs can, but on the whole our officers have conducted themselves with dignity, restraint and effect

My object on this occasion, however, is not to give you or ourselves bouquets, but rather brickbats

I would put, in the forefront of our defects, a tendency to talk too much I often think that as a nation we talk too much In the first thirty years of its existence, even the Indian National Congress thought that it could talk the British out of India But the more eloquently it talked, the more firmly the British entrenched themselves in the saddle It was only when a man of action, Mahatma Gandhi, appeared on the scene, a man of action who was also a man of ideals, that the British realised that their days were numbered This lesson, however, has still not sunk into our national consciousness After independence our people have not risen as one man as they have done in Russia or China to consolidate the revolution I suppose the incessant talk that is going on in India is characteristic of Parliamentary democracy After all, the word Parliament comes from a French word, 'parler', which means to talk

However necessary it may be for a politician to talk, it is not fitting for a diplomat to hold forth in season and out of season Talk may take various forms One is self-glorification There are some persons who vaunt their own virtues and flaunt them in the eyes of foreigners It is of course good to be conscious of our virtues It is good to remember that we won our struggle for freedom in a unique manner It is also good to remember that in some ways our foreign policy is unique But it is not good for diplomats to talk about this always—and talk in such a way as to imply that we alone are saints and that all else are sinners That is intensely exasperating and in the end becomes just boring

Sometimes our talk takes a reverse form We talk about our weakness in the presence of foreigners Some of our people take an almost masochistic pleasure in laying bare their faults and the faults of their friends Sometimes we talk in the presence of foreigners about things which we should keep to ourselves For instance, we may be tempted to talk about dissensions, real or imaginary, in the Cabinet It is well known that Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, the two great architects of modern India, were not exactly alike in temperament or in outlook, but to talk about those differences in the presence of others, to exaggerate them and perhaps even to gloat over them, is improper

Sometimes I wish India had produced an arch-perceptor of good manners like Confucius We have had great seers and prophets and philosophers, but none quite like Confucius, who laid down elaborate rules as to how men and women should conduct themselves in society Today, however, Confucius has become a back number in China

It is extraordinary how quickly foreigners can get us to talk We are only too ready to tell them everything about ourselves and our Government I remember a dinner party in the house of that astute British diplomat, Sir Frank Roberts, whose guest of honour was a highly placed Indian Before the dinner was over, he had talked all about himself and his colleagues and how such-and-such a question had been discussed in the Cabinet and what differences had arisen and what the outcome of it all was He did not realise that all that he said would be embodied in a despatch to the British Foreign Office the next morning

The way that gentleman talked leads me to make another observation He monopolised the conversation Conversation consists as much in the art of listening as in talking, in the art of drawing others out as in holding forth oneself Otherwise it becomes like the definition of a matrimonial kiss 'A transaction where one party gives and the other party takes'

I have been disturbed at the leakages which have occurred in our office Sometimes they have been deliberate, more often, they are unintentional They result from the common weakness of trying to show off that we are in the know of things In normal times this may not do any harm, but in a crisis a leakage may prove disastrous

At this stage I would like to utter a word of caution In avoiding one evil we must not fly to the opposite extreme In avoiding garrulity you should not become altogether taciturn A diplomat must not pose as a strong, silent man He should always be forthcoming That diplomat serves his country best who combines the utmost candour with the utmost affability

Another defeat which I have noticed in our officers abroad is a lack of team spirit In this respect our Missions abroad might learn a lesson from us here I think we can claim that we have been getting along as a happy family in the Ministry of External Affairs There are no groups, no cliques among us We do not, as in the British days, draw a distinction between 'Sahib log' and others We do not treat Superintendents as a very useful, but necessarily inferior, order of creation Nor do we treat the office as something purely mechanical My first Collector, J C Molony, defined an office as 'a multitude of tails, which, sometimes singly, sometimes collectively, wags a feebly

resisting heads' We have been trying to import a little more of the human touch into our official dealings

In some of our Missions abroad the team spirit has been completely lacking Sometimes trouble starts from the smallest of incidents In Brazil, for instance, we had a very gifted man as our Ambassador He had taken a nurse with him, called Sally, to look after his child in Rio de Janeiro One day he turned her out, and she sought, and was given, refuge by a member of his staff The result was war to the knife between the Ambassador and that officer I summed it all up in a limerick

There was His Ex M Masani,
Who took Sally with him as his nanny
He heard his child yell,
And gave her just hell,
And she ran for her life to Kripalani

In another Embassy an incident arose out of a bottle of pickle Let me quote a letter which was written, under the Ambassador's directions, by the Third Secretary of that Embassy to a senior officer

His Excellency has directed the First Secretary to make a formal enquiry into the allegations made against one of the members of the staff in respect of the loss of a bottle of pickle, presumably intended for you, about four months ago It is felt that this enquiry will give a fair chance to the accused person to defend himself In this connection, we were told that you are in possession of certain documents which will throw light on the case In order to arrive at just and impartial findings, which of course is also your intention, H E the Ambassador indicated that these documents should be made over to the Investigating Officer as soon as possible These may please be sent to this office

Can you imagine anything more laughable?

Sometimes we are not responsible for the trouble in our Missions, but our better halves, and our better halves, when roused can be our worse halves In a certain Mission the wife of the Ambassador was a striking woman, beautiful, sparkling and sophisticated His Secretary, too, had a wife, also beautiful, but in a different sense, she was demure, winsome and alluring. The Ambassador's wife was the favourite of the diplomatic corps, and the Secretary's wife was of

the literary and artistic circles One would have thought that it was a fair division, like the Pope's division of the world between Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century But no! Each eyed the other with jealousy Each would encroach on the province of the other This latent animosity was bound to flare out, as indeed it did, drawing their husbands, the staff and the entire Mission into its baleful blaze I mention this so that those of you who are married may keep a hold on your wives Not that I have ever been able to do this, nor, fortunately, has it been necessary!

In cultivating the team spirit, one should not forget the importance of discipline In fact a proper team spirit can only be based on discipline It is the duty of the entire staff to respect the head of the Mission, not merely as the head of a particular Mission, but as the representative, par excellence, of your country in another The Head of the Mission should, of course, earn this respect He should not give cause for any suspicion of favouritism Confidence begets confidence, as Goethe has put it, 'the only way in which you can make a man good is by making him think that he is already what you wish him to be'

I have had reports that some of our officers have been remiss in the matter of hospitality In all countries no one is held in greater derision than a miser If your object in life is to save money, I would advise you to give up diplomacy and become a stock-broker

In avoiding miserliness, it is unwise to run to the other extreme and be extravagant Nothing is more vulgar in the representative of a poor country like India than ostentatious display

In this talk I have spoken to you only about certain weaknesses which we should avoid. But that is not enough One must be not only negatively good but cultivate positive virtues For this I would ask you to read, or re-read, the chapter on 'The qualities of an ideal diplomat' in Harold Nicolson's excellent little book *Diplomacy*

It remains for me only to thank you for all the cooperation and assistance which you have extended to me as Foreign Secretary I could not have wished for an abler, or more pleasant, band of colleagues to work with I have naturally come to know some of you more intimately than others, I wish I had known all of you equally well That was possible in the old days, but not now In the thirties, when I was in the Foreign and Political Department as a Deputy Secretary, the External side of that department consisted of one Foreign Secretary, one Deputy Secretary and half an Under Secretary, for we shared the Under Secretary with the Political Department Today the Ministry of

External Affairs consists of the foreign Minister, the Deputy Minister, two Secretaries, the Secretary for Parliamentary Affairs, three Joint Secretaries, seven Deputy Secretaries and twenty-seven Under Secretaries These figures show the difference in India's international stature before and after we attained independence Let it be our first endeavour to maintain and, if possible, to improve our status Much depends on us, for we are the pioneers in the conduct of India's foreign policy We have a great cause to work for, world peace, we have also a great man to work for, Jawaharlal Nehru By working zealously, let us, as far as it lies in our power, further that cause and lighten the burden of that man to whom, next only to Gandhiji, we owe all that we have and are, our position, our prestige and our very emergence as free men

(*Indian Express*, 1973.)

70. How to be Happy Though Human

If I were living in Europe of the Middle Ages this is a subject on which I could have dilated with relish In those days it was assumed that to be human was to be unhappy The original sin of our ancestors, Adam and Eve, was responsible for the plight of mankind Tempted by the voluptuous Eve, the susceptible and weakminded Adam ate the forbidden apple Thereupon, they were thrown out of the Garden of Eden, and their progeny, too, remained outside the pale of salvation The human body became a den of sin and the earth, a vale of tears.

The world into which I was born was the very antithesis of mediaeval Europe I was born in Kerala at the turn of the last century We, Nairs, and, for that matter, Hindus, did not believe in the conception of original sin God himself was a late-comer in Kerala There were gods and goddesses, galore, but not God in the sense of an omniscent, omnipotent, omnipresent Divinity that shapes our ends Ours was an animistic society, over which Hinduism was but a thin veneer We were content to be human, because we did not know, or, for that matter, much care what the divine was like We were at home in this world, because we were not preoccupied with another world The distinction which St Augustine made between Civitas Dei (the City of God) and Civitas Romani (The City of Rome), irreconcilably opposed to each other, was meaningless to us We were pagans and content to be pagans

Let us remember, in passing, that Jawaharlal Nehru regarded himself as a pagan Once he said that his outlook on life was essentially paganistic He did not believe in the dictum, 'He that is not with me is against me'—a dictum which lay at the base of the cold war In the clash of rival doctrines, political and ideological, Nehru was determined that his country shall remain non-aligned It was this attitude which provoked John Foster Dulles, that High Priest of the cold war, to denounce non-alignment as 'short-sighted and immoral' Last month, American policy, which the successors of Dullies carried out with a savagery which the world had never seen before, met with its final Nemesis in Vietnam and Cambodia

To revert to the society in which I was born and brought up, this world was all in all to us So, by and large, has it been to the Chinese I am not thinking of the Chinese Communists, who believe that 'religion is the opiate of the people' and that God is a capitalist invention to keep the working classes quiet I am thinking of the attitude which was prevalent in China when Confucius ruled the roost, and he did so for nearly 2500 years

On God and the other world, Confucius kept a discreet silence When one of his disciples asked Confucius what he thought of the other world, he replied, 'You know precious little about this world, how can you know anything about the other world?' When another disciple asked him whether they should serve the gods, Confucius replied, 'How can you serve the gods, when you do not know how to serve your fellow-men?' 'But must we offer sacrifices to the gods?', asked another disciple 'By all means do', replied Confucius, 'but keep them at arm's length

That is what we Nairs used to do too. We, too, offered sacrifices, even animal sacrifices, to the gods, but we kept them at arm's length We kept them away even from such solemn ceremonies as marriages and funerals No Brahmin attends our marriage or recites the Vedas No padre blesses the couple and exhorts, 'Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder' No priest is summoned to give comfort or absolution to a dying man or pray that his soul may rest in peace Once, when Winston Churchill was lying seriously ill, a priest called on him and asked him, 'Mr Churchill, are you ready to meet the Almighty?' Churchill replied, 'The more pertinent question would be, is the Almighty ready to meet me' In Malayalee ears this would not have sounded too irreverent

I do not suggest that life among the Nairs was perfect The atmosphere of Kerala changed somewhat with the advent of the lofty religion of Hinduism Its torch-bearers were the Namboodiris who for centuries had a near-monopoly of spiritual wisdom and temporal power and produced the greatest metaphysical thinker the world has ever seen, Sri Sankaracharya Nothing, however, did so much to take Kerala into the mid-stream of Indian life than the Malayalam versions of the *Ramayanam, Mahabharatam* and *Bhagavatham* by Thunchath Ezhuthachan, a great writer of the 16th century There Kerala remains, a frail but robust bark, with distinctive colours, rowing by the side of bigger boats with a rhythm and velocity of its own and sometimes even overtaking them

Together with Hinduism came some of the evils which had crept

into Hindu society, such as the caste system and untouchability. But basically everyday life among the Nairs flowed on with an even grace and simplicity For instance, until quite recently men and women wore nothing more than a loin cloth When Mrs Indira Gandhi visited the USA at a time when the 'topless' was the rage, she was asked what she thought of it. 'Why', she replied, 'we have had it for a long time in India—in Kerala'

The most vital of human relations, the relation between the sexes, was characterised by a natural simplicity and grace Man and woman stood on a footing of equality' If anything, the woman stood a trifle higher, for she was the head of the family Marriage was not a sacrament, as among the Hindus, or a binding contract, as among the Muslims, but simply 'Sambandham', which literally means a connection which may be terminated at will by either party If a woman was tired of her husband, all that she had to do was to leave his sandals outside the gate, which meant that he was no longer welcome to the house The proud Nair woman never left her house, it was for the husband to come to her when he needed her Children were no problem because they were looked after by the Tharawad or joint matriarchal family In matters of property and inheritance, the woman stood on the same plane as the man

A puritan may be inclined to look askance at a society, in which marriage was loose, divorce was easy, priests were on sufferance, and religion, in the conventional sense of the word, was at a discount He may even be tempted to dub it immoral. But it vaguely answered to the conception of the 'new morality', advocated by one of the greatest thinkers of our age, Bertrand Russell 'We need', he said, 'a new morality based upon love of life, upon pleasure in growth and positive achievement A man should be regarded as good if he is happy, expansive, generous and glad when others are happy A man who acquires a fortune by cruelty or exploitation should be regarded as at present we regard what is called an immoral man, and he should be so regarded even if he goes to Church regularly'

With all their inequalities, social relations in Kerala were mellowed by a thoughtfulness, kindliness and even tenderness which are increasingly absent in the increasingly mechanised society of today With the influx of alien influences and alien modes of thought and conduct and particularly with the intrusion of politics into every field of life, Kerala has ceased to be the idyllic spot which it used to be But, for centuries it showed that the key to happiness did not lie in curbing human instincts but in developing them, not for one's own aggrandise-

ment, but for the common weal The real problem to which we should address ourselves is not 'how to be happy though human', but 'how to be happy by remaining human'

(*The Art of Living*, 1975)

PART VI

TODAY

71. To Live is to be Related

A couple of years ago, I had a letter from the sponsors of 'The Fraternity Cultural Orientation Course' asking me if I would inaugurate the Course I was unable to do so as I had to go abroad, and I have lost touch with the Movement Nevertheless, the first sentence in a very attractive brochure which was sent to me remains in my mind It says· 'To live is to be related' Here are six simple words, but pregnant with meaning They have special relevance to the situation of mankind today

In our infancy we are related to our parents and more especially to our mother Gradually our attachments extend to our brothers and sisters, cousins and nephews At school they widen further and embrace our class-mates, school-mates, play-mates and teachers The school now becomes a complement to the home

I was brought up in a highly Hindu home and educated in a highly Christian school, the C M S High School in Kottayam, and later in the Madras Christian College Both at school and at college our day began with the study of the Christian scripture, and it ended with the reading of, or listening to, the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha at home. I do not regret this. I honestly believe that I am a better Hindu on account of my study of the Bible, or, at any rate, none the worse for it.

When you are out of your teens you begin to be attracted by the other sex And generally you become attached legally and irrevocably to one member of the other sex, she promptly establishes herself as your better half Sometimes marriage results in a conflict between the wife and the mother, and the tyranny of the mother-in-law, and the resistance of the daughter-in-law sometimes results in a tragedy In the West the problem is solved by practically eliminating the parents from the household. When a young couple set up house the old couple move out. They can at best be visitors to, not residents in, their children's house, or the children may condescend to send their parents to a Home for the Aged. In India, where the joint family tradition still lingers this is regarded as callous. So, strangely enough, is it in Russia

Soon after the Great October Revolution the Soviet Union began with an aversion to all established institutions, including the family Marriage was regarded as a bourgeois affair It was thought that to satisfy one's longing for sex should be as simple as to quench one's thirst with a glass of water This was known as the glass of water theory Some people, however, still regarded marriage as a useful, though not a sacred, institution The controversy came to the notice of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin who said 'It is alright to say that to satisfy one's instinct for sex is like drinking a glass of water, but surely you do not want to drink from a glass from which a dozen others have drunk ' That settled the question Marriage is now considered as a respectable, though not a holy institution Divorce is easy and holy wedlock does not become what A P Herbert called 'holy deadlock' The unmarried mother is not looked down with contempt or horror Indeed there is a provision in the Soviet budget for the maintenance of children of unmarried mothers

I mention all this as an example of the varying attitudes towards, and the conflicts inherent in, human relations Sometimes our relationship with something becomes so intense that it begins to dominate all others By the time we attain middle age we become related to a sect, a caste, a religion or a political party If a person becomes so attached to it that he begins to look askance at every other sect, caste, religion or party as trash, he becomes a fanatic or bigot And bigotry and fanaticism are the worst of all evils

All men are attached to one country or another This is known as patriotism, but if one acts on the principle, 'My country, right or wrong' patriotism may become, as Dr Johnson defined it, 'the last refuge of a scoundrel'

Once in a few centuries a man is born whose attachment is not confined to his country or people but whose concern embraces all humanity so much so that he is even prepared to lay down his life for mankind Such a man was born in Palestine more than 2,000 years ago, and he was crucified Such a man was born in our own country in our own time, and he was assassinated

Somewhere I saw a definition of life some years ago Life was defined as conscious contact with environment Take for instance a fish Remove it from its watery environment, cast it out on land, and it dies Clip a bird's wings and prevent it from rising into the empyrean, and it ceases to be a bird. Or put a man in solitary confinement for a number of years, and he loses that distinctive faculty of man, reason, and for all practical purposes he ceases to be a man

Willynilly, we are all in contact with our environment But that is not enough We must be conscious of our contact with our environment and be in harmony with it This is stressed in the prospectus of 'The Fraternity Cultural Orientation Course' which says, 'The secret of successful living lies in the maintenance of harmonious relationship with those around us' The idea is well put Only, I would omit one word from this sentence I would omit the word 'successful' Success is not the be-all and the end-all of life Success is a siren which tempts many an honourable man into the primrose path of the everlasting bonfire Graceful and decent living is far more important than a successful life Indeed the life of a man who is bent on being successful often lacks grace and even decency, though there are some illustrious examples to the contrary

I would also make an addition to the sentence quoted above I would add the words, 'with nature' One of the unfortunate tendencies in modern times is for man to move farther and farther away from nature True, he has conquered nature He has defied the law of gravity, flown into space and put his foot on the moon The Russian and the American have shaken hands in space, a celestial gesture symbolic of the terrestrial *detente* for which they have been striving

In conquering and subduing nature man has lost his intimacy with it Why, he has moved away from his own nature What is the nature of man? That is a subject on which philosophers have differed from time immemorial All would agree that human nature has a better and a worse side man is full of contradictory impulses In some ways man is allied to the angels, in other ways, to the devil

There are some philosophers like Rousseau who believe that human nature is intrinsically good and spoke of a golden age in the past,

'When wild in the woods the noble savage ran'

The opposite view has been taken by political scientists like Hobbes who described primitive man's life as 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' By and large the former school stands for freedom, the latter, for authority, which curbs man's animal instincts and keeps him in order The trouble, which we ourselves have experienced, is that the former may lead to chaos and the latter to totalitarianism

The root of the trouble is that people do not feel sufficiently strongly that to live is to be related Related, not in the sense in which the tiger is related to the lamb, the exploiter to the exploited or the racist ruler

to the coloured population, but related in the sense in which Confucius said, 'Within the four seas all men are brothers'

Physically, the people of the world are now more closely related to one another than in any previous period of human history With the advent of the air age and the vast improvement in communications the world has shrunk Distances have been annihilated and today every one is everyone else's neighbour

The physical closeness between the peoples in different parts of the world is not reflected in their political relations The strong are still inclined to follow

The good old rule, the simple plan
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can

It is this attitude that has produced wars and conflicts from time immemorial But the time has come when war is utterly inconceivable A local war can easily become a global war, and a conventional war can become a nuclear war And a nuclear war will mean the end of civilised life, if not life itself, on earth

To live is to be related And not to be related is to perish

(*Triveni*, 1978)

72. My Idea of Success

My friends often ask me what is the secret of my success It is a loaded question like 'Have you stopped beating your wife?' to which one cannot say yes or no without compromising oneself To assume that one's life has been so successful as to be of interest to others will be egotistic To profess that it has not been successful will be false humility In any case to pretend that it has any lessons for other will be sheer presumption

Reviewing my book, *Many Worlds*, the London *Times Literary Supplement* observed that Mr K P S Menon is free from what Prof Saintsbury calls 'the saintly style of Indian writing' which even those who are not very saintly are apt to affect. I have never posed as a saint or a sage giving illumination to lesser mortals groping in darkness

It is true that to all appearances my life has been eminently successful A first at Oxford, first in the ICS examination, the first Indian to be taken into that *sanctum sanctorum*, the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India, the first Ambassador of India to China, the first Foreign Secretary of independent India and, for a period of nine years, Ambassador to the USSR and concurrently to Poland and Hungary—what more do you want? To all appearances it was a case of roses, roses all the way, without any thorns.

Yet my self-esteem is considerably diluted by the thought that much of my success was due to sheer luck Looking back on my life of nearly 80 years, of which half was spent in the ICS and IFS, I cannot help reflecting how great a part luck has played in my life. Let me give a few examples

At school I was a dud in mathematics For me, for my teachers and for my parents, the great problem was how I would ever get over the hurdle of the matriculation exam, in which a candidate had to get a separate minimum in mathematics Fortunately, the system was changed in the year in which I was to appear for the examination The matriculation examination was replaced by the school final

examination, in which no minimum was required in mathematics, and I came out of it with flying colours, even though I got only 19 marks out of 100 in mathematics In fact, I stood second in the Travancore State, the first being N R (subsequently Sir N R) Pillai who got 100 per cent in mathematics

The only setback I suffered in my educational career was in the B A examination in which, to the grievous disappointment of my professors of the Madras Christian College where I had annexed all the college prizes, I got only a second class in the university examination For this I have an excuse My father passed away just before the examination This dampened my spirits considerably and I joined the M A class in Madras totally dejected I could not put my heart into my studies and felt that somehow I had gone stale Just then my elder brother came to my rescue like a *deus ex machina* and decided to send me to Oxford, even though the War was raging and the voyage was unsafe In fact, we had to go to England round the Cape of Good Hope as the Mediterranean was unsafe it was infested with German submarines We had to proceed in a convoy, escorted by battleships and destroyers, from Sierra Leone in West Africa Even so the two other passenger ships in our convoy, S S *Leinster* and S S *Galway Castle*, were sunk by German submarines in the Irish Sea, but our ship, S S *Mishima Maru*, sailed safely into Liverpool

The total change of surroundings from Madras to Oxford and the richness, the fulness and the variety of our life at Oxford acted on me as a tonic The feeling of depression which had set in during the last days of my stay in Madras gave way to elation and I got a brilliant first in the Honour School of Modern History at Oxford

Then, luck again came into play I took the combined examination for the Indian Civil Service, the Home Civil Service and the Colonial Civil Service—in those days it was a combined examination, and one had to take it in England—in 1921 Until that year a candidate had to take a very large number of subjects and undergo special coaching from such coaching institutions as Wren's I had no special desire to join the ICS, though I must confess I was not altogether insusceptible to its glamour, and I made no special preparations for it In 1921, the year in which I had to appear, the entire curriculum for the examination was changed, and it was brought into line with the curriculum for the Honour's degree in the great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge The result was that to me, after a First at Oxford, the ICS examination was child's play I appeared for it casually and almost nonchalantly and stood first

In the Service, too, my luck persisted Nothing bores me more than routine, and my training during my probationary period as Assistant Collector, Trichinopoly, was not such as to instil into me a flair, was an easy-going individual and left me largely to myself Moreover, contrary to the advice of Couchman, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, who had told me that if he had his way he would not allow a single ICS officer to have a wife or a car in the first ten years of his service, I had both within a few weeks of my posting to Trichinopoly Both were distracting, and I found that the honeymoon period was not particularly conducive to administrative training

A good administrator is one who combines a broad vision with meticulous attention to detail When I was Under Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the North West Frontier Province, Sir Norman Bolten, the Chief Commissioner, wrote thus on one of the files which I was handling 'Many of our officers do not see the forest for the trees, Mr Menon does not see the trees for the forest'

Again I had a great piece of good luck In 1924, a Royal Commission, headed by Lord Lee, came to India to speed up the Indianisation of the superior services That Commission recommended that 24 per cent of the Foreign and Political Department, which until then used to be exclusively reserved for British members of the service, should be Indianised, and I was the first Indian to be admitted to it Dealing with the Frontier tribes and the Princely States, that department offered infinitely greater variety than district work, generally in one State, which was the lot of the average ICS man Much to my delight I moved to and fro between Hyderabad, Peshawar, Ceylon, Rajputana and Baluchistan, dealing with totally different problems and developing an aptitude for dealing with totally different peoples—an aptitude which stood me in good stead when after independence, it fell to my lot, as Foreign Secretary, to deal with diplomatic representatives from all over the world and, as Ambassador, to develop friendly relations with our great neighbours, the USSR and China

Looking back on my academic and professional career one almost feels that at every turning-point of my life some fairy god-mother stood by my side removing the obstacles in the way and beckoning me to fresh fields and pastures new

However successful I have been, I have never thought that success is the be-all and end-all of life Whether there is anything beyond life and if so, what is a quest on which the most inquisitive minds have

been engaged from time immemorial, with contradictory results That is a field which angels fear to tread (though many devils don't) and I certainly do not wish to rush into it But even applying mundane standards, a craze to be successful is apt to be a hindrance rather than a passport to happiness

I have always been inclined to suspect the over-successful man the he-man, the go-getter, who lords it over his fellow-men and treats them as foot-stools for him to rise in society In this respect I share the classical Chinese attitude towards a highly successful man When I was in China in the middle forties there appeared a cartoon in a Chinese journal about Lin Yu-tang, the famous Chinese writer who had settled down in the USA Confucius appears to him in a dream and asks him how he has managed to be so prosperous 'Because', said Lin Yu-tang 'I have sold my Country and my people' *My Country and My People* is the title of Lin Yu-tang's best-known book

I hope that not even the worst ICS-hater will say that I ever sold my country and my people, even though half my service fell in British days I venture to think that within limits I have been able to serve my country and my people even under British rule In Ceylon, for example, I was the Agent of the Government of India during the period of the Great Depression in the early thirties Then a number of tea and rubber estates had to be closed down and in others the pay of the Superintendents and staff had to be drastically cut Then there arose an outcry against the minimum wage which had been fixed for Indian labourers in consultation between the governments of India and Ceylon I took the line that the minimum wage was after all a minimum wage, below which a labourer could not keep his body and soul together, and that if the Indian labourer had to starve we would prefer that he should do so in his own country rather than overseas Eventually, the minimum wage was left untouched

In 1934 I was sent on a mission to investigate the state of Indians in Zanzibar, Kenya and Uganda My report formed a forthright indictment of the callous and discriminatory attitude of the Colonial Office towards Indians It was resented by the Colonial Office which resisted its publication for a long time Eventually when it was published it led to a public agitation against the Government of Zanzibar, and to an Indian boycott of cloves, the principal commodity of Zanzibar of which India was the principal importer This brought the Zanzibar government to its senses

Serving in the Princely States and among the Frontier tribes, I was

able to demolish the British diehard theory that the Princes would resent the appointment of an Indian as the representative of the Paramount Power and that the virile tribes of the Frontier would refuse to be ruled by an Indian—and a Hindu As Agent-General for India in China in British days, I left the Chinese in no doubt that I was first and foremost an Indian In a book by Robet Payne called *China Diaries (1941-46)* which has just been published, I was pleased beyond measure to read, 'Of all the foreign representatives in China K P S Menon was the most beloved'

Too great a concentration on achieving success does have a corrupting influence on the soul It is apt to turn a man into a careerist and to tempt him to indulge in the game of one-upmanship This has happened to some Indians as well as Englishmen who spent long periods in the Central Secretariat in Delhi and Simla, basking in the Viceregal sunshine and rubbing shoulders with the gods and goddesses of Olympus I myself look back on my spells in the Secretariat as the least enjoyable in my service When I was in Delhi in the thirties as Deputy Secretary, I felt that I was bracing air and the rugged hills of the North West Frontier and was only too happy to be posted back to another part of our Frontier, Baluchistan, as Political Agent, Zhob, even though Major Finnis, a predecessor of mine, and Col Barnes, my immediate successor, were assassinated there And after India became independent the brightest patch in my service was the period of nine years which I spent in Moscow—then distant not merely geographically, but psychologically and spiritually It gave me much satisfaction to see India and the USSR drawing steadily closer to each other and finally concluding the historic Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

It is good for a man to be successful in his work, but this cannot be the sole, or even the chief, criterion for judging his worth as a man Christ said that man cannot live by bread alone Nor can man live by work alone Mere work can be soul destroying It can turn a man into machine

Aristotle once drew a distinction between work play and leisure He defined work as something which one does for something else for example for earning his livelihood Play was mere reaction from work Aristotle, who deemed leisure as higher and nobler than work and play, defined it as 'the employment of time in an activity for its own sake' When I look back on my life, it is the moments of leisure that stand out The only thing which I have performed in my life in the nature of a feat was itself a product of leisure, namely, a 125 day

journey, mostly on foot and on horseback, from India to China, along the most formidable mountain trail in the world, across the Himalayas, the Karakorams and the Pamirs It was this which drew out whatever talents I had for writing and resulted in my first book, *Delhi-Chungking Delhi-Chungking* was the forerunner of many another book, including my autobiography, *Many Worlds*, *Russian Panorama, The Flying Troika, The Lamp and the Lampstand, Twilight in China, Journey Round the World* and *Yesterday and Today* All of them deal with places and people rather than problems Problems come and go, but people and places are of perennial interest I am glad that the desire to be successful in my work has not prevented me from having the time to watch, to enjoy and to expose the infinite variety of nature and the oddities of men and women who, with all their oddities, have a common denominator, an essential humanity 'Within the four seas', said the great sage, Confucius, 'all men are brothers' Whatever success, or, what is more important, happiness I had had in my life is due to the fact that wherever I have served I have never lost sight of this fundamental fact

(*Art of Living*, 1977)

73. What Life Has Meant to Me

If men can be divided into two classes, introverts and extroverts, I belong to the latter category In the evening of one's life, however, one is apt to be introspective and ask how life has treated one, or rather, how one has treated life What has been the keynote of my life, approaching 80? I would answer this question in one word, adjustment

Men of sterner mettle might scoff at this conclusion They might regard adjustment as a camouflage for compromise To them the thrill of life lies in conflict Such is the stuff of which heroes, martyrs and fanatics are made I bow my head in reverence to the heroes and martyrs in a good cause, but of all the deadly sins there is none I detest more than fanaticism

Very early in my life, I began to learn the importance of the virtue of adjustment As a child I watched how my father had to adjust himself to the transition of our society in Kerala from the matriarchal to the patriarchal system For centuries, we, Nairs, had followed the matriarchal system The woman was the head of the family I for instance belonged to my mother's family, not to my father's, and to my father, it was his sister who mattered rather than the wife, for it was through his sister that the family was perpetuated and property descended

In the beginning of this century, however, the matriarchal system was beginning to crack up My father was one of the earliest nonconformists He left behind his family, headed by his sister in Ottapalam in British Malabar, and came away to Kottayam in the Travancore State and set up house there with his wife and children His sister watched his doings from afar and insisted that she should have her due at my father's hands, and what she demanded as her due was, in my mother's eyes, her own due Neither my mother nor my aunt was lacking in spirit or in words I admired my father for the patience and forbearance which he exercised towards both and the serenity with which he reconciled his affection for his wife and children with his duty towards his sister and her children

I myself did not have to face such a dilemma in my married life I had no sister, and in any case the day of the sister's supremacy was passing But the very attempt of two individuals to live together 'until death do them part' is an adventure which calls for a high degree of resilience Why, the mere physical adjustment is not so simple as it seems It was after many months that my wife and I hit on what to us is the ideal coital position, which is the reverse of the orthodox position, sometimes called 'the missionary position', followed and almost prescribed in the West As for mental adjustment, my attitude in marriage has been much the same as that of the man, who, like me, celebrated his golden wedding, and when asked what was the secret of the success of his married life replied, 'When we got married we agreed that my wife would have the last word in all minor matters and I would have the last word in all major matters And no major matter has arisen yet ' Nothing is so ruinous to a marriage as the tendency to make mountains of the many molehills on the matrimonial path

In the early part of the century, it was not merely the social life that was changing, but political attitudes The politics of Travancore, however, revolved round the royal family The Maharaja of Travancore was an estimable individual, and I must confess that I still retain towards his successor, an equally estimable individual, something of that sentimental loyalty which I had for Sri Moolam Thirunal In my childhood, stray echoes began to filter into Travancore regarding the incipient struggle against foreign rule in British India, the burning of foreign cloth, the eloquent denunciation of foreign rule at the sessions of the Indian National Congress and the spurt of terrorism in Bengal But these left no lasting impression on our parochial minds What did produce an impression was the deportation of one Ramakrishna Pillai from Travancore for his heinous offence in criticising the conduct of a highhanded Dewan of Travancore Fifty years later I visited his neglected tomb in Cannanore where he died in exile

In 1914 when I went to Madras for my college studies, a wider world opened out before me In those days our idol was Mrs Annie Besant, who woke up the Madras Presidency, which used to be called the 'benighted Province', with her vehement agitation for Home Rule She, however, was thrust into the background by the advent of Mahatma Gandhi with the halo of a hero and a saint from South Africa I recall how eagerly we listened to his speech in Madras in 1916 soon after he entered Indian politics. Competing with such influences on our minds was the benign impact of the British

professors of the Madras Christian College—and in those days all professors were British, Indians being only lecturers—and the earlier, equally benign influence of the dedicated Christian teachers of the C M S High School All this favourably disposed us towards the *status quo*

At Oxford we lived in an atmosphere of freedom The Indian Association at Oxford, called the Oxford Majlis, of which I became the President in 1920, thought itself a revolutionary association It was revolutionary in words, and occasionally even in deeds the memory of Hardayal, an Oxford man who rebelled against British rule in India and spent his life in exile, still lingered in the Majlis But it did not strike us as odd that we, who made fervent anti-British speeches, could at the same time be studying for the ICS, 'the steel frame' of the Government of India The inconsistency was brought home to me by a summons from the India Office soon after I had stood first in the competitive examination in London for the combined ICS, HCS and CCS A delegation from the Council of the Secretariat of State for India saw me and said that they had seen a report of a speech of mine in which I had stated that India could not long remain in the British Empire If that was my conviction, they said, it would be contrary to the covenant of the ICS, the first article of which stipulated loyalty to King George V and his successors I replied that I did feel that India would not long continue in the Empire as such but it might remain as a self-governing Dominion like Canada and Australia 'So you were unfortunate in your reporters', they said 'You may sign the covenant.' Here was a case where 'loyalty' and patriotism had to be adjusted towards each other!

They continued to be adjusted until 1947 Fortunately, they did not come into direct conflict with each other, except on Quit India Day, 1942, when I was Chief Minister in Bharatpur and leading members of the Congress, including Sri Raj Bahadur, who later became a Cabinet Minister, had to be placed in custody, in accordance with the instructions of the Government of India that if the Quit India resolution was passed, all members of the Congress Committee at the Centre, in the Provinces and the Princely States should be clapped up I, however, kept in touch with Sri Raj Bahadur and his colleagues in jail, provided them with the necessary amenities and found an early opportunity for releasing them, and they generously acknowledged the courtesies extended to them by being in the forefront of those who organised an affectionate farewell for us in 1943, when I was posted as India's Representative in China Thereafter, I could throw myself

heart and soul into the task of promoting India's interests wherever I was posted, and particularly during the nine fruitful years we spent in the Soviet Union

Most Western diplomats, and many Eastern ones as well, had to make a conscious and not always successful effort to adjust themselves to the conditions in the USSR, especially during the cold war I flatter myself that somehow I found myself at home in Moscow from the beginning of our stay there This is because I did not carry any unnecessary ideological lumber with me I was indeed prejudiced in favour of, and fully shared, Jawaharlal Nehru's outlook on life and politics, but I was not prejudiced against the Soviet Union any more than he was

Nehru once said that his outlook on life was essentially pagan So was our outlook in Kerala which was a mixture of animism, Hinduism and Christianity, which entered Kerala soon after the death of Christ What Nehru meant by saying that he was a pagan at heart was that he could not share the intolerance of those systems which laid down that one path and one only would lead to salvation If Russia sought salvation from its age-old backwardness through Communism, that was Russia's business That is why I could not share John Foster Dulles's indignation at the 'ungodly creed of communism' and his efforts to organise a 'global crusade' against it

So far as our relations with the Soviet government are concerned, what mattered was that India and the USSR were neighbours, and both stood against exploitation Here are two states which had different traditions, different philosophies and a different outlook on life in this world and in the other and yet have been cooperating wholeheartedly in their mutual interests and in the interests of peace and justice This is a supreme example of the virtue of adjustment in the international field Thus the capacity for adjustment has served me well not merely in my personal life but in the diplomatic field as well, and I venture to think that this has been of some use to my country and to my people and, at any rate, has done them no harm

(*Art of Living*, 1978)

74. The River of Life

J C (subsequently Sir John) Masterman, who was my tutor at Oxford nearly sixty years ago, has written a fascinating autobiography called *On the Chariot Wheel* It concludes with an extract from a friend's letter which runs thus 'We are all like a river nearing the end of its run, wider in experience, slower in movement and approaching the loss of our identity in the great unknown ocean ' Masterman is nearing the end of his run—he is 87 years old—and was moved by this passage So was I I am approaching eighty

It is an interesting coincidence that the thought contained in this passage came to me more than twenty years ago and was elaborated in my diary and later incorporated in my books *Russian Panorama* and *The Lamp and the Lampstand*

In the summer of 1957 we did an interesting journey down the Volga from Gorki, formerly Nizhni Novgorod, to Astrakham at the mouth of the river on the Caspian Sea It took us ten days Everyday I recorded my impressions in my diary On the last day, while approaching our destination, I wrote the following passage in my diary

'She (the Volga) has come a long way from her source, Lake Seligar The longest river in Europe, she has travelled more than 3000 kilometres Many companions had joined her and lost their identity in her—the Oka, the Kama, the Sura, the Sviyaga and the Smmara She has nourished Kingdoms and Khanates on her banks, they are gone, she remains Poets have sung her praise, artists have painted her, and lovers have sought comfort in each other on her banks or release from each other in her waters And now, a new type of man, with monstrous machines, has appeared, trying to order her about* regulate her, control her, make her rise and fall, and go hither and thither in obedience to his will In the earlier stages of her journey, forests used to flank her, woods waved and smiled to her and hills

*The reference is to the establishment of a number of hydro-electric projects on the Volga.

tried to waylay her and, not succeeding, let her go The last to take liberties with her was the Zwingli mountain which wrenched her, like some fierce ideology, first to the left and then to the right At Sisran, she freed herself from the clutches of the Zwingi mountain and resumed her steady southern course But now she seems rather weary of it all She has lost something of her former gaiety and ebullience She has no more companions to play with, the hills and woods have deserted her, she has nothing to rest her eyes on except the dreary steppe Alone, unfriended, melancholy, slow, the Volga has come to the end of all things, nothing Just as a man who, having tasted all philosophies and found them all unsatisfying, commends his soul to the Infinite, so also the Volga, serene but resigned, would soon merge her being in the Caspian Sea and find her Nirvana there'

A man's life can be compared to the course of a river Of course each man has his idiosyncrasies Rivers too have their peculiarities Generally speaking, they are engaged on a fertilising mission Some rivers, like the Ganga, the Volga, the Nile, the Danube and the Yang-Tse-kiang, have formed the setting for mighty civilisations A few cause much havoc With their yearly floods they devastate the countryside, so much so that one of these mischief-makers, the Yellow River in China, was known for centuries as 'the River of Sorrows' Any student of history can find human parallels for such rivers

Endless are the vagaries of rivers—and of men Some rivers flow steadily and majestically into the sea, others start with a bang and end with a whimper they lose themselves in the sands of the desert. Some leap out and fall over precipitous cliffs forming magnificent waterfalls which are the joy and wonder of the world, others are dry and arid except during the monsoon. Some, like the Alf, the sacred river, run

In caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea

Others go on merrily, mocking at human beings and singing

Men may come and men may go
But I go on forever

Some have engraved their names in history and legend, others are barely known And all of them have an air of having a mission to perform

Each man can apply this riverine simile to his own life

The river of my own life had its source near the Vembanad Lake For fourteen years it flowed quietly in Kerala Having received sustenance in Madras and Oxford it started flowing in a northernly direction right up to Peshawar Among the places where it tarried were Trichinopoly, now called Tiruchirappalli, Tirupattur, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Rajasthan, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province

Thereafter, it underwent a strange transformation As if by magic it became an intercontinental river China was the scene of its activity for some years There it watched the exaltation of China into a Great Power, the decline of 'the Soong Dynasty' and the irresistible advance of Communism It made a detour to Korea and watched the melancholy spectacle of a country which was caught up in the cold war—a country which God had joined together and man had put asunder It also paid a visit to the USA where it witnessed the framing of the Charter of the United Nations in San Francisco Finally, for nine years it found itself in Russia where, together with the Volga, it fertilised the soil of Indo-Soviet friendship

Back home after wandering about for forty years, it still possessed its old restlessness For seventeen years after it came back it was still perpetually on the move between the north and the south of India, and once a year it visited its old haunts, particularly in the Soviet Union But now it is a little tired of it all It is in much the same mood as the Volga while approaching its union with the Caspian Sea It has begun to feel, to repeat the words in my old tutor's book, that 'we are all like a river nearing the end of its run, wider in experience, slower in movement and approaching the loss of our identity in the great unknown ocean'

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